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James

The great English
novelists

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HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

LIGHTS OF LITERATURE

# THE GREAT ENGLISH NOVELISTS

WITH INTRODUCTORY
ESSAYS AND NOTES

BY
WILLIAM J. DAWSON
AND
CONINGBSBY W. DAWSON

VOL. II

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

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## NOTE

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# I

# The Masters of the Modern Novel

# The Masters of the Modern Novel

WE have already seen that the English novel stood complete in its tendencies with Sir Walter Scott. The methods adopted by the great writers who preceded Scott were tentative and experimental; Scott gave the modern novel its organic form. He endowed it with epic vigor, made it vivid with narrative lucidity, and gave it the form of a history full of keen characterization and dramatic impulse. In his hands it became an instrument of extraordinary flexibility, capable of all moods. It superseded the drama as a mirror of life, and challenged poetry itself as an interpretation of the emotions. He determined its form, and all subsequent writers are his debtors, however far they may be removed from Scott in his peculiar gift of romanticism.

It was only to be expected that Scott should have direct imitators. Seven years before Scott's death Mr. G. P. R. James had published his *Richelieu*, the first of a long series of fictions which followed the method without catching the inspiration of the author of *Waverley*. About the same time Mr. Harrison Ainsworth had commenced his industrious career, which was to continue for a full half-century. Five years before Scott's death Bulwer Lytton had achieved great popularity with his *Falkland*. Much more significant is the fact that within four years of Scott's death the first of the *Sketches by Boz* had appeared, and Thackeray had commenced a life of definite authorship

with the publication of the "History of Samuel Titmarsh" in *Fraser's Magazine*. Of these writers, Dickens was to attain a popularity even wider than Scott's; Thackeray was to establish a more limited but equally uncontested fame; and Bulwer Lytton, after many vicissitudes of reputation, was to find his rank with the brilliant secondary masters of fiction.

Scott determined the form of the modern novel, but no one needs to be told that his spirit was wholly opposed to modernity. Had he lived to read the first pages of Dickens, he would have suffered the same kind of shock which Tennyson might have experienced in reading the *Barrack-room Ballads* of Kipling. For Scott's art concerned itself wholly with the past, and the past in its most stately and impressive episodes. He moves among kings and queens; statesmen, counsellors, and great soldiers; courts and battlefields; pageants and tournaments; the rivalries, intrigues, triumphs, and disasters of world-famous personages; the great events which establish or dethrone dynasties, make whole periods of time shameful or glorious, and determine the destiny of nations. Nor was he controlled in his choice of theme only by the instinct of the artist; his mind inhabited the past by native instinct. The most ardent personal passion of his life was to recreate the forms of feudalism at Abbotsford, and in this desire we read the man. And undoubtedly he did succeed, not only in disengaging the great figures of the past from the phantom world of history; not only in depicting with fire and with fidelity bygone manners and modes of life; but also in turning the mind of the world to the study of the past. The revival of Gothic architecture was in large part due to his unconscious influence; so also was the Oxford Movement, which sought a new authority for faith in tradition. His persistent gaze was backward. In the

movements of his own time he had little interest. The modern world, with its rise of industrialism, its political aspirations, its opposition of class interests, its new sense of social injustices, had for him no existence. He was not only out of touch with it, but was prevented by the very constitution of his mind from ever being in touch, or apprehending it.

The modern novel was to take account of all these things. It was to depict not the past, but contemporary life and manners. It was to become the supreme expression of the modern mind. It was to deal with the vital facts of ordinary existence.

The change was almost dramatic in its suddenness. Scott dies in the autumn of 1832. About this same time a young man of twenty is engaged in studying contemporary English life with extraordinary faculties both of sympathy and minute observation. He has had no education worth speaking about; his acquaintance with books is of the most limited description; he has known no social advantages. He had been flung out into the world of London as the merest child to earn his bread under conditions of hardship and drudgery, which, as he himself says, might easily have made him a little thief. He has had no home, for his father is in prison for debt. He has had no friends capable of recognizing the rare qualities of his mind, or of directing them. "It is wonderful to me," he says, in after-years, "how I could have been so easily cast away. It is wonderful to me that no one had compassion enough on me—a child of singular abilities—quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally—to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school." Somehow the child survives parental dereliction, exhausting drudgery, and the sordid tragedy of unfriended child-

hood. He does more than survive: he kindles his imagination in solitary hours with the writings of Smollett, Fielding, and Goldsmith; studies the lower aspects of London life with a thoroughness learned from experience; and by some miracle —for such it truly seems —keeps his buoyancy of spirit, his freshness of humor, his keen sympathies, under conditions that would have reduced an ordinary mind to dull stupidity or apathy. He finds at last a task suited to his powers. He becomes a reporter, studying life at first hand in a vast variety of aspects. He is familiar with London police-courts and prisons; with the great coach-roads on which he is perpetually travelling; with a hundred quaint villages, old churches, hidden country houses; with taverns, hostleries, inn-yards; with blustering squires, sharp-tongued ostlers, smart serving-maids, ponderous coachmen, pompous editors, vituperative politicians—with all the stir and bustle of the road, and with a dozen types of human life that have kinship in the days of Bardolf and Falstaff. He sees all, remembers all, forgets nothing. Every trick of speech or manner in the folk he meets is etched indelibly upon his memory. He finds them worth while—these ostlers, coachmen, serving-men; they are to him as interesting as Leicester and Louis XI. are to Scott. And presently, in a happy mood, he begins to write of all that he has seen. He has the creative faculty; he touches these common figures, and they live. The ostler calls himself Sam Weller; the elderly innocent who cannot travel a dozen miles without absurd misadventures is Mr. Pickwick. It is all done in high spirits, without the least serious theory of art, and certainly without the remotest sense of a new period in literature; yet that is what it meant. For this young man, merely intent on describing life as it was with true sympathy and humorous observation, was destined to supplant Scott in popularity, and to turn the

minds of men back from the study of the romantic past to the living actual present

Another thing, equally significant, about Dickens is that he is the first great English writer who deliberately adopts fiction as his sole vocation. A possible exception may be found in Jane Austen, who wrote nothing but novels; but Jane Austen wrote almost secretly, for her own amusement, and two of her best known novels were posthumous. Probably she herself regarded her writing as merely a by-product of an industrious household life. Scott himself frankly owns that he would not have written novels had he not been beaten out of the field of poetry by the superior genius and popularity of Byron. Fielding was a magistrate and playwright; Smollett a ship's doctor; and neither wrote novels until he was well advanced in life. Richardson is a bookseller who is past middle life when he began *Pamela*. Defoe is a journalist, a politician, a pamphleteer, who does not write *Robinson Crusoe* till he is fifty-eight. Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* is the solitary expression of a mind engaged constantly in every form of literature, from the merest hack-work to famous poetry and brilliant plays. But Dickens at twenty-six has determined the entire course of his life. He has recognized in novel-writing a vocation, a high form of art, which calls for the concentration of all his powers, and for nearly forty years the production of great novels is the sole occupation of his life. Such a circumstance is in itself indicative of the new position of dignity to which the novel had attained on the death of Scott. It was no longer a fugitive and experimental form of literature. It had outclassed the written drama; it had displaced the familiar essay; it had become a kind of silent theatre, wherein all the motives of life were represented in their action upon character and events. It had, in fact, become the most

popular of all forms of literature, affording to its successful masters ample rewards, and the most rapid road to fame.

Of all modern novelists Dickens is the most entirely English in the spirit and scope of his work. With the exception of *A Tale of Two Cities*, and the American parts of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, his scenes are laid entirely in England, and for the most part in London. He thus returns to the methods of Fielding and Goldsmith, whom he recognizes as his masters, for they also were exclusively English in their choice of material. Perhaps one of the secrets of his immediate and immense popularity was that he wrote of things which were familiar to the great mass of the people. As with the orator, so with the novelist, he is most popular who speaks of that which is already well known to the majority of his audience. Let the mind range over the books of Dickens, and what do we find? Very little that lies outside the observation of ordinary contemporary Englishmen. We have the coach, the postchaise, the road, the hunting-field, the cricket-field; the streets of London with their vivacity, variety, and vivid patches of human drama; the counting-house of Dombey, the law-offices of Dodson and Fogg, the blacking factory of David Copperfield; farther afield, little Nell with her grandfather in a country churchyard; Pegotty in his hut on Yarmouth beach; Squeers misgoverning his tribe of famished boys in Yorkshire; but nowhere does the range of observation rise far above the ordinary levels of common life. With the higher levels of English social life he has no acquaintance; but he atones for his ignorance by the marvellous completeness with which he knows the life of the common people. The London of the poor, of the lower middle class, of the shiftless, struggling mass, he knows as no man ever knew it. It is interwoven in the very fibre of his thought and feeling. He cannot write out of Lon-

don. He has to return hastily from Genoa to find in the London streets the imperative incentive to his genius. The limitations of his mind secure his triumph. In being so absolutely, even so insularly, English, he achieves his fame, for he makes his novels the most representatively English of all novels in English literature.

This in itself is a great achievement, but Dickens also contributes another element to English fiction, even more original and refreshing. He introduces the spirit of humanitarianism; he is in intense sympathy with the tragic sufferings of human life. This note was entirely new when Dickens wrote. Goldsmith had touched it, but in a fugitive fashion; it is not found at all in the jovial narratives of Fielding and Smollett, nor the brilliant social comedy of Jane Austen. Defoe, it is true, conducts the reader through a hundred scenes of squalid tragedy, but it is to point moral lessons rather than to excite sympathy with suffering; and Richardson is always too much a sentimentalist to be truly sympathetic. But Dickens is first and last a sympathizer with men, and very frequently a positive humanitarian, with direct purposes of social reform in his mind. He writes of Bumble that he may expose the inhumanities of the workhouse, and of the sufferings of Smike that he may destroy the fraudulent pretensions of Dotheboys Hall. It may be alleged with truth that he often carried this tendency too far. There is a feminine element in his nature which occasionally pushes him into effeminacy. His call for tears is too constant. A manly reader may complain that the pathos of Paul Dombey's deathbed is overdone, and that little Joe's sufferings would be more moving if less were said about them. But the cardinal fact remains that the element of human sympathy in Dickens won him a multitude of readers, and made him the best loved of all novelists. He

was the first novelist who established vital personal relations with his readers. He had the genius to be loved, and he expected love from his readers. His great triumph was, of course, the triumph of genius; but it was in equal degree the triumph of personality; and the element in his personality which contributed most to his success was his ardent humanitarianism.

Upon the faults of Dickens scores of acute critics have levelled their weapons of scornful analysis, and sometimes of bitter satire. It must be admitted that his style is often of the worst; that he mistakes verbiage for eloquence, overdoes his effects, plays to the gallery, is often histrionic when he means to be dramatic, is wearisome in his use of catch-phrases, is artificial when his theme calls for simplicity; and in his overwrought sympathy is apt to become maudlin. But it must be remembered in all justice that these faults are by no means habitual. Many of them were probably due to a tired mind. He deliberately chose to live by novel-writing—that is, by the continual exercise of the imaginative faculty. He had, therefore, to write for bread, and often had to write when he could only do so by overstraining his imagination. Under such conditions the temptation to reproduce effects whose original charm lay in their spontaneity was overwhelming. But in such books as *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* the style is consistently lucid, simple, flexible, absolutely adapted to its ends, and wholly free from artificial and false emphasis. Of all human faculties the rarest, the most delicate, the quickest to be outworn, is the creative faculty; and the marvel with Dickens is that it lasted so long and remained so vital. The larger books of Dickens are from three to four times the size of the ordinary novel, and contain anywhere from fifty to eighty figures; yet in all this vast portrait gallery there is not one character that

is not sketched with such vital truth that it conveys a distinct and lasting impression to the reader's mind. Outside the dramas of Shakespeare, where is there such a crowd of living figures, the sole offspring of the creative will? It might content an ordinary novelist to have created a Sam Weller, or a Pecksniff; but the genius of Dickens is equally apparent in such subsidiary personages as Joe Gargery, Barkis, Jingle, Plornish, Wegg, and a hundred others who move before us in their habit as they lived. In the wealth of this creative faculty Dickens excels all novelists, not even Scott himself excepted.

It may be noted as a subsidiary but significant feature of his work that he is the first English novelist who has thoroughly understood the pyschology of the child. Children are not wholly unrepresented indeed in the older fiction, but with little delicacy of perception, and are apt to be manikins rather than genuine children. Dickens studies them in detail, with the most exact observation and the keenest insight. He makes little Nell the central figure of one of his longest books, Paul Dombey the most pathetic figure in another, and has nowhere written so exquisitely as in the description of the childhood of David Copperfield and Pip. He understood with extraordinary accuracy the mind of the child, perhaps because his own childhood had been so introspective and so lonely. The terrors of Pip in the graveyard by the marshes, his speculations on the tombstones, his attitude to Joe Gargery, to his termagant aunt who has "brought him up by hand," to Mr. Pumblechook, constitute a document of child life and experience unrivalled for truth and fidelity in any literature. And, if we would measure the miraculous range of Dickens's creative power, let us recollect that the hand that sketches Pip also gave us Bill Sykes; that he knows the mind of the criminal as thoroughly as the mind

of the child; that with the sole exception of certain wooden figures which represent for him lords and ladies there is not one figure in all his thousands of pages whose pyschology is not known to him by a kind of divination. His touch may not always have the same sureness, but if he fails at all, he never fails with children, and if the work of Dickens is ever neglected, the last persons in his books to be forgotten will be the children.

It may be claimed that Dickens was the first truly democratic novelist—not indeed in the field of observation, where others had preceded him—but in his peculiar sympathies, which bound him to the common people, and made him at times their advocate and defender. On the contrary, Thackeray, his one great contemporary rival, was an aristocrat novelist.

Unlike Dickens in everything, he was in nothing more unlike him than in the slow growth of his genius. He did not commence the publication of *Vanity Fair* until he was thirty-six—an age at which Dickens had written six of his greatest books, and was writing *David Copperfield*. Of course, there had been a vast amount of experimental work with Thackeray, but nothing that had given him rank among great novelists. This slowness of development is significant, for it indicates a large, somewhat unwieldy, intellect, that does not readily discover its true bent and act in conformity with it. He was born to modest fortune; educated at the Charterhouse and Cambridge; by taste and circumstance a cosmopolitan, familiar with Paris, Rome, Dresden, and Weimar; a clubman, a Bohemian, cultured, travelled, widely read, and, until the loss of his fortune, without any serious purpose in life. When circumstances make him a writer, he naturally writes of the things he knows, and the kind of life he knows best is that which lies upon the borders of Mayfair. His world

is at the farthest possible remove from the world of Dickens. There are no Micawbers, Wellers, or Wilfers in his portrait gallery; we have instead rich merchants, impecunious dragoons, brilliant social adventuresses, a Sir Pitt Crawley, and a Marquis of Steyne. Dickens pictures sordid poverty, and makes it almost lovable; Thackeray pictures sordid wealth, and makes it hateful. Dickens is a great humorist but a clumsy satirist; Thackeray is an occasional humorist, but always a master of the most incisive satire. For Dickens, life is in the main comedy, and even farce; for Thackeray, it is irony. He is akin to Swift rather than Smollett and Fielding; at the heart of all his writing burns a terrible indignation at the scheme of things. And yet deeper still, as with Swift, lies an infinite fount of tenderness, an implacable pity, an aching, agonized sense of the futility of life. And allied with all this pity and indignation, those gifts of tears and fire, is something Swift never had—a real and humble faith in God and in "the ultimate decency of things," a reverence for human virtues and affections, a hope for some final harmony wrought out of present discord. A pessimist Thackeray was not; still less was he a cynic; rather he was a pained prophet of the actual, who sees all the manifest worst, yet steadfastly believes in the not manifest best which survives the worst.

Thackeray brought to the service of English fiction the most complete intellect it has known, unless possibly we except Meredith's. No novelist has written with such distinction, with such lucid ease of style; and style, which is the "great antiseptic," may preserve his pages from decay long after they have ceased to interest new generations by their subject-matter. This, however, involves a certain admission of deficiency in the art of Thackeray, for a novel ought not to be remembered by its style alone.

Scott was noticeably careless of style; Dickens had a bad style; yet each is immortal. Why is it that no one but the professorial pedant troubles himself greatly over the lack of style in Scott, or the bad style in Dickens? Because their books live not as specimens of free, fine English, but by their dramatic cohesion, their vital characterization, their overwhelming truth as transcripts of life. Thackeray has these gifts, too, but not consistently. No character in fiction is more wonderfully elaborated than Becky Sharp; but her story reaches its real climax in the rupture with Rawdon Crawley, and her subsequent adventures are tedious. The truth is that Thackeray often shows a strange indifference to dramatic climax. It is not ignorance, for where was dramatic climax reached with such economy of means, and yet with such overwhelming effect, as in the brief sentences which record the death of George Osborn on the field of Waterloo? It is rather a kind of carelessness, as though at times he grew tired of his own creations. One feels instinctively the flagging of creative power, and realizes that it works through an element of obstruction. From the point of view of technique it is not possible to defend Thackeray's constant habit of interpolated comment. To the leisurely and cultured reader these comments are delightful; they are miniature essays full of philosophic wisdom and literary charm. To the ordinary reader, however, they are interruptions, as unwelcome as a constantly interpolated chorus would be in "Hamlet" or "Macbeth."

Yet it may be argued that these very interpolations constitute the one wholly novel feature which Thackeray contributed to English fiction. Being, as they were, miniature essays in philosophic observation, their total effect was to give a background of philosophy to the novel. There is no trace of a philosophic conception of life in any precedent

novelist. Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett tell their tale without comment, and leave the reader to his own conclusions. If Scott is tedious, it is in over-elaborate description; if Dickens drops his magic wand, it is to indulge in rhetorical tirade. But Thackeray is never quite content to paint life; he loves to analyze it. He does not leave us to our own conclusions; he is afraid that we shall miss the point, and so he gives us elucidatory counsels of wisdom as he proceeds. There is thus set up a definite theory of life, and it is less a Rawdon Crawley or a Becky Sharp that we remember than certain moral tendencies for which they stand, a certain interpretation of human existence itself which touches our moral sense and colors our moral view. In other words, the tale ceases to be a tale alone; it becomes a morality. This element in Thackeray's writings is much too notable to be missed by the most careless reader. It marked the welding of philosophy and fiction. It was presently to bear fruit in the novels of George Eliot, and its influence is apparent in our own time in the stories of Stevenson, which are all colored by, and some directly written in obedience to, a distinct philosophic conception of life.

In 1847—the same year in which *Vanity Fair* was published—there appeared unheralded a novel by an anonymous author, which attracted immediate attention—the famous *Jane Eyre* of Charlotte Brontë. It differed entirely from any previous work of fiction in the English language. It was a novel of the emotions, and it was a novel of revolt. Its crudities were evident, but still more evident was its "sweep of tragic passion," its flaming sincerity, its elemental force. It was less a calculated work of fiction than a passionate interpretation of a woman's heart.

It was in this latter quality that its real power lay. It

owed nothing to any previous or existing master; it was fearless, daring, and original. It did no more than picture a lonely girl against a background of sombre and tremendous landscape, in revolt against poverty and weakness, hungry for life, yet denied the fulness of life; tempted but triumphant; a creature of wild passions but of iron will—a woman crying out for some form of emancipation, she knew not what, and desperately in earnest. Let the reader recollect the women of fiction which filled the novels of the period—the Dora and Agnes of Dickens, the tame Amelia and artificial Becky Sharp of Thackeray—and he will begin to understand the fascination of Jane Eyre. This fiery slip of a girl, plain, isolated, without social grace or advantage, is alive in every fibre. She is full of tragic passion. She speaks in the language of a wild poetry. She challenges the world to break her unconquerable spirit. She knows little of the world, but what she knows she knows thoroughly. She is animated in all her thoughts by a sense of the injustice of life, especially to woman. She thus becomes the advocate of all lonely women, shut up in a narrow life by the barriers of an artificial social system. She understands their unspoken desires, their silent tragedies, and tears away the veil from their meek secrecies. She refuses the world's polite condescension, and scorns its hypocritical pity. It is not pity she asks, but justice; not condescension, but equality. Charlotte Brontë pleads her cause with such angry eloquence, depicts her heroine with such vital realism, that, in spite of crude construction and occasional descents into yet more crude melodrama, Jane Eyre wins her way to foremost rank among the creatures of fiction, and is less a creature of fiction, perhaps, than Charlotte Brontë herself, the great protagonist of woman's fight for liberty.

How far Charlotte Brontë and her great sister Emily

affected the development of English fiction it would be hard to say, but there are certain tendencies which may be directly traced to their influence. Two of these have already been noted when *Jane Eyre* was described as a novel of revolt and a novel of the emotions. In a general sense all novels deal with the emotions; but the particular quality of Charlotte Brontë's work is that the sole motive is emotional. She can sketch the parts of life she knows with realistic precision; she can indulge in social satire and even in rare humor; but all this is subsidiary to the intensity of her feelings. There is a personal and passionate note that runs through all her work, something akin rather to the poet than the prose writer. In this she started a movement which has made the modern novel the most personal of all forms of literature outside poetry, and the most flexible of all instruments for the interpretation of the emotions. Another tendency to which she and her great sister Emily gave fresh impulse and direction was the relation of human actions to natural objects. In this she was not a discoverer, for Mrs. Radcliffe in her novels of terror had practised the same art, and Dickens had made lavish use of what Ruskin has called "the pathetic fallacy." But she differs from all previous writers in this, that an attitude to Nature, which was in them accidental, is with her essential. The tempestuous sky, the wild moors, the sombre and sinister landscape, are not mere backgrounds to her stories, but are vital to them. She does not merely link effects of sunset and sunrise, of wild storm or brooding calm, with certain human moods and emotions, but she makes them the interpreters of these emotions. The characters she paints have been created by their influences, and are not comprehensible without them. And this conception is not subsidiary, but cardinal; it is the keynote of her work. The fiction of the two great

sisters is thus, like Wordsworth's poetry, a recall to Nature. It is a reassertion of the subtle bond between man and the physical universe, hereafter to be yet more thoroughly illustrated in the relation of Marty South to the woodland, and of the various actors in "The Return of the Native" to the solitary and depressing grandeurs of Egdon Heath.

Yet more notable is the fact that in Charlotte Brontë we mark the first real triumph of the feminine in fiction. Here also others had blazed the way, particularly Frances Burney; but hitherto women had written of woman's life only objectively. They had even sometimes written of women, or tried to write, from a man's point of view; but with the exception of Frances Burney the work had always been objective. It is true that no man could have written a novel of Jane Austen's; but only because no man could have rivalled her delicacy of touch, or her power of minute observation in a world essentially narrow and secluded. But Charlotte Brontë wrote a novel no man could have written at all, however delicate his touch, because it is not objective, but intimately and passionately subjective. It was, as we have seen, the revelation of a woman's heart, and therefore not only the kind of novel a woman could best write, but the kind of novel which could only be written by a woman. Women were swift to learn the lesson, and entered eagerly upon the new field. They recognized the emotional novel as theirs by right of aptitude, and were henceforth to make it especially their own.

The year 1847 may be justly called the *annus mirabilis* of English fiction. Dickens, now thirty-five, had reached what Mr. Forster calls "the summit" of his career; Thackeray had triumphed with *Vanity Fair; Jane Eyre* had been published. From this time the progress of English fiction proceeds upon definite and orderly lines of development. The novel had passed out of its early forms; it had become

historical, democratic, philosophic, and passionately emotional. It was to expand and develop these forms without much idiosyncratic change for many years to come.

Many notable and famous names adorn these years: Bulwer Lytton, Reade, and Kingsley, each greatest in the historical novel; Wilkie Collins, a master of plot; Mrs. Gaskell, and Anthony Trollope, who bring the social and domestic novel to a high degree of perfection; but no essentially new development of English fiction is reached till we come to the work of George Eliot, George Meredith, and Thomas Hardy. It is possible only to summarize the work of these writers.

George Eliot developed the philosophic bias given to the novel by Thackeray, but also brought it back to common and rural life. All her great successes are achieved in the characterization of humble folk, whose lives she thoroughly understood through early association. The Bedes, Mrs. Poyser, Silas Marner, the Tullivers, are among the most admirably drawn of all persons in fiction, and are drawn also with rare pathos and humor. She has little command of plot, but her power of characterization is perfect. She is at times too deeply weighted with philosophy, and her philosophy is not cheerful. Her faculty of story-telling is acquired rather than native, and hence her narrative often moves heavily. Her art is often too highly moralized to attain complete success, yet in the long run this very element contributes to its dignity and its appeal. George Meredith is also a moralist, but a moralist equipped with wit. In point of mere intellect, with the exception of Thackeray, he stands easily first among modern novelists. He is subtle, brilliant, accomplished; a poet and a thinker; but we feel that with him, as with George Eliot, he has adopted fiction, rather than turned to it by sole and native vocation. No profounder or more illumining passages of

psychologic analysis can be found in any writer; but in the art of story-telling he often fails, more through indifference or brilliant perversity, however, than incapacity.

It must be admitted also that Meredith often conveys the impression of a fundamental lack of conviction: he is too frequently a brilliant critic of life, whose very brilliancy blinds him to reality; a witty commentator on life rather than a sympathetic exponent. His novels are of the intellect more than of the heart; and yet so various and contradictory is his genius that such a conclusion is no sooner reached than we recollect passages of pure pathos —like "Clare's Diary," which have few rivals in later fiction.

The last of the Victorian novelists, a much greater artist than either George Eliot or Meredith, is Thomas Hardy. Since the great triumvirate of 1847 no novelist has appeared with such gifts of originality and genius. Without the pedantic wisdom of George Eliot, or the intellectual vivacity and brilliance of George Meredith, he has, nevertheless, brought to the service of imaginative literature a combination of powers unique both in themselves and in their mode of expression. He also obeys the philosophic tendency, but with him it is always subservient to the art of pure narrative. It is in the method of his narrative that his originality is most evident. Himself trained as an architect, he builds his story with the keenest kind of mathematic accuracy, and with the most meticulous attention to detail. No stories in English fiction are constructed so scientifically. It is never safe to ignore the merest detail which he includes, for it is certain that it has vital relations to the whole. Like Sophocles, he sees the end from the beginning, and approaches it by deliberate and calculated stages. He has also the Sophoclean sense of the inevitableness of events. Granted certain facts, which may appear in themselves trivial, he finds in them

the seeds of yet distant but tremendous and ineluctable tragedy. Plot, totally ignored by Thackeray, practised with very incomplete success by Dickens, has with him the definite laws of an exact science.

But plot alone can never make a great book, and plot is after all with Hardy quite secondary to other high and rare gifts of genius. His fine characterization of peasants, woodlanders, and shepherds is Shakespearian both in breadth and quality. He is above all things a realist, but a realist who sees things in their essence rather than their surfaces. Probably no novelist has ever studied the accessories of his drama with such patience and precision; he has even gone so far as to furnish us with maps of the localities he describes. It should be noted, too, that he has confined the topography of his stories to scenes thoroughly well known to him by long acquaintance. The district which he calls Wessex includes a large tract of rural England, relatively unchanged by modern progress, and full of primitive types of life and manners. It is for this reason he has made it the scene of his dramas. In these primitive types he finds all the material of high tragedy; men and women of large and simple natures, touched with both the paganism and the austerity of Nature. Gabriel Oak, Michael Henchard, Giles Winterbourne, are persons who belong to the humblest social order; Hardy reveals them as capable of the agonies and exultations experienced by the highest natures, and in doing this he raises our estimate of the dignity of human life. He also attains to a spirit of austere dignity in his own writing. Dealing constantly with natures really dignified in spite of humble social conditions, with primeval passions and the large and deep things of life, his books have not only the spirit but the gravity of Greek drama.

Hardy's fame has not been rapid. His books, never

widely heralded, in some instances exciting the notoriety of censure rather than applause, have, nevertheless, made their way among all serious lovers of fiction, and have finally become classics. They have done this in spite of a spirit of gloom which invests them, and an insistence on the tragic mischances of life, not wholly justified perhaps by the general scheme of things. But for the most part they are absolutely truthful transcripts of life, and are felt to be so by all who approach them without the prejudices of optimism, which may be quite as scornful of fact as the prejudices of pessimism. But however they may affect the reader—and no novels are less likely to secure a consensus of opinion—no one can deny them greatness, the kind of elemental greatness which comes from bigness of theme, profound conviction, and the most patient and deliberate art.

In America no novelist of the calibre of the greatest has appeared, with the exception of Hawthorne, whose *Scarlet Letter* must always remain one of the classics of fiction. Among American writers the short-story has attained a perfection of technique unknown among English writers; but the novel yet awaits its supreme exponent. Perhaps it needs a more general settling down of life into fixed and leisurely forms, before the great artist can appear who shall "see life steadily and see it whole." Where life itself is a continually shifting kaleidoscope of new forms, fugitive and vivid impression is possible, but not the long, patient gaze of just and balanced vision. That will come in time; with it will doubtless come also the great artist for whom Howells and Cable, Twain and Frank Norris, and many other contemporary American writers are the brilliant precursors.

The contemporary novel, in its latest forms, has done little more than continue existing tendencies; it has found

no entirely new path. It has perfected its technique, as was natural, for it has had the opportunity of profiting by both the errors and the triumphs of the great masters. It has annexed new fields of observation, which is also natural in view of the constantly widening knowledge of the globe. Kipling speaks for India, Rider Haggard for Africa, Mr. Crawford for Italy. The novel has thus become highly specialized, and not only in respect of landscape and atmosphere, but in general intellectual and social conditions. Thus Mr. Gissing confined himself to the more sordid side of lower middle class, and Mr. Wells in his earlier work gave us the novel of science. From the modern novelist we expect exact knowledge of the things he depicts, and unless this knowledge is both thorough and first-hand his book is not likely to attract attention. Nevertheless, in spite of superior method and technique, and the guidance afforded by accepted standards, the novel has steadily declined in distinction in recent years. It has been content with a small stage suitable for domestic comedy, but not intended for classic drama. Its *scale* has, therefore, diminished, and consequently it has rarely dealt with the big elemental passions in a large way. Many novels appear every year which are abundantly endowed with cleverness, admirable alike in form and technique, but the dynamic of big ideas and convictions is wanting in them, and once read they are rapidly forgotten. The mere story has come to stand for everything; and as long as that is sufficiently well told to beguile an idle hour the ordinary reader is content. Perhaps it would be fairer to say that he is content from necessity and not from choice; for it can hardly be supposed that a public which buys and reads innumerable editions of the great writers would not welcome with enthusiasm any new writer who showed the least sign of equality with them.

Much might be written of the contemporary novel, which, however, can have no place in this essay. More and more the novel tends to become the sole form of popular literature. It is still, in the hands of the greater novelists, the exponent of serious ideas, and the mirror of much that is sweetest and best in the general life. Among the foremost contemporary writers of both England and America nothing is more noteworthy than an excellence in craftsmanship, which keeps a surprisingly high level. Each year sees the publication of novels of a quality so good that in a less crowded field they would have been regarded as remarkable; and if these are often neglected for ingeniously constructed "best sellers" it is a thing that has happened before, and is by no means a miscarriage of justice peculiar to our own time. The novelist of serious aims has need to remind himself continually that good work can never wholly fail, for without this faith he will be seduced into offering his gift upon the wayside altars of purposed inferiority and cheap reward. It is therefore well for us to turn our eyes to the supreme masters, with whom novel-writing was a great vocation; who wrought not in haste, but with the conscience and patience without which no fine art of any kind is possible; whose authority was derived from ideals of art devoutly conceived and deeply studied; whose fame has been ratified by the praises of the past, has remained undimmed into the present, and will endure beyond it.

# II

# Humour

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## Parson Adams and Parson Trulliber[1]

*Henry Fielding* (1707–1754)

PARSON ADAMS came to the house of Parson Trulliber, whom he found stripped to his waistcoat, with an apron on, and a pail in his hand, just come from serving his hogs; for Mr. Trulliber was a parson on Sundays, but all the other six days might more properly be called a farmer. He occupied a small piece of land of his own, besides which he rented a considerable deal more. His wife milked his cows, managed his dairy, and followed the markets with butter and eggs. The hogs fell chiefly to his care, which he carefully waited on at home, and attended to fairs; on which occasion he was liable to many jokes, his own size being, with much ale, rendered little inferior to that of the beasts he sold. He was, indeed, one of the largest men you should see, and could have acted the part of Sir John Falstaff without stuffing. Add to this that the rotundity of his belly was considerably increased by the shortness of his stature, his shadow ascending very near as far in height when he lay on his back as when he stood on his legs. His voice was loud and hoarse, and his accent extremely broad. To complete the whole, he had a stateliness in his gait, when he walked, not unlike that of a goose, only he stalked slower.

Mr. Trulliber being informed that somebody wanted to

[1] From *Joseph Andrews.*

speak with him, immediately slipped off his apron, and clothed himself in an old night-gown, being the dress in which he always saw his company at home. His wife, who informed him of Mr. Adams's arrival, had made a small mistake, for she told her husband she believed here was a man come for some of his hogs. This supposition made Mr. Trulliber hasten with the utmost expedition to attend his guest. He no sooner saw Adams, than, not in the least doubting the cause of his errand to be what his wife imagined, he told him he was come in very good time; that he expected a dealer that very afternoon; and added, they were all pure and fat, and upward of twenty score apiece.

Adams answered, he believed he did not know him. "Yes, yes," cried Trulliber, "I have seen you often at the fair: why, we have dealt before now, mun, I warrant you. Yes, yes," cries he: "I remember thy face very well, but won't mention a word more till you have seen them, though I have never sold thee a flitch of such bacon as is now in the sty." Upon which he laid violent hands on Adams, and dragged him into the hog-sty, which was indeed but two steps from his parlor window. They were no sooner arrived there than he cried out, "Do but handle them; step in, friend; art welcome to handle them, whether dost buy or no." At which words, opening the gate, he pushed Adams into a pig-sty, insisting on it that he should handle them before he would talk one word with him.

Adams, whose natural complaisance was beyond any artificial, was obliged to comply before he was suffered to explain himself; and, laying hold of one of their tails, the unruly beast gave such a sudden spring that he threw poor Adams all along in the mire. Trulliber, instead of assisting him to get up, burst into a fit of laughter, and, entering the sty, said to Adams, with some contempt,

"Why, dost not know how to handle a hog?" and was going to lay hold of one himself; but Adams, who thought he had carried his complaisance far enough, was no sooner on his legs than he escaped out of the reach of the animals, and cried out, "Nil habeo cum porcis: I am a clergyman, sir, and am not come to buy hogs." Trulliber answered, he was sorry for the mistake, but that he must blame his wife; adding, she was a fool, and always committed blunders.

He then desired him to walk in and clean himself; that he would only fasten up the sty and follow him. Adams desired leave to dry his great-coat, wig, and hat by the fire, which Trulliber granted. Mrs. Trulliber would have brought him a basin of water to wash his face, but her husband bid her be quiet, like a fool, as she was, or she would commit more blunders; and then directed Adams to the pump.

While Adams was thus employed, Trulliber, conceiving no great respect for the appearance of his guest, fastened the parlor door, and now conducted him into the kitchen, telling him he believed a cup of drink would do him no harm, and whispered his wife to draw a little of the worst ale.

After a short silence, Adams said, "I fancy, sir, you already perceive me to be a clergyman." "Ay, ay," cries Trulliber, grinning, "I perceive you have some cassock; I will not venture to caale it a whole one." Adams answered, it was, indeed, none of the best; but he had the misfortune to tear it about ten years ago in passing over a stile.

Mrs. Trulliber, returning with the drink, told her husband she fancied the gentleman was a traveller, and that he would be glad to eat a bit. Trulliber bid her hold her impertinent tongue, and asked her if parsons used to travel without horses; adding, he supposed the gentleman had

none, by his having no boots on. "Yes, sir, yes," says Adams; "I have a horse, but I have left him behind me." "I am glad to hear you have one," says Trulliber; "for I assure you I don't love to see clergymen on foot; it is not seemly, nor suiting the dignity of the cloth." Here Trulliber made a long oration on the dignity of the cloth (or rather gown), not much worth relating, till his wife had spread the table, and set a mess of porridge on it for his breakfast. He then said to Adams, "I don't know, friend, how you came to call on me; however, as you are here if you think proper to eat a morsel, you may."

Adams accepted the invitation, and the two parsons sat down together; Mrs. Trulliber waiting behind her husband's chair, as was, it seems, her custom. Trulliber ate heartily, but scarce put anything into his mouth without finding fault with his wife's cookery, all which the poor woman bore patiently. Indeed, she was so absolute an admirer of her husband's greatness and importance, of which she had frequent hints from his own mouth, that she almost carried her adoration to an opinion of his infallibility.

To say the truth, the parson had exercised her more ways than one; and the pious woman had been so well edified by her husband's sermons that she had resolved to receive the bad things of this world together with the good. She had indeed been at first a little contentious; but he had long since got the better; partly by her love for this, partly by her fear of that; partly by her religion; partly by the respect he paid himself, and partly by that which he received from the parish. She had, in short, absolutely submitted, and now worshipped her husband as Sarah did Abraham, calling him not lord, but master. While they were at table her husband gave her a fresh example of his greatness; for as she had just delivered a

cup of ale to Adams, he snatched it out of his hand, and crying out, "I caal'd vurst!" swallowed down the ale. Adams denied it; it was referred to the wife, who, though her conscience was on the side of Adams, durst not give it against her husband. Upon which he said, "No, sir, no, I should not have been so rude to have taken it from you if you had caal'd vurst; but I'd have you know I'm a better man than to suffer the best he in the kingdom to drink before me in my own house, when I caale vurst."

As soon as their breakfast was ended, Adams began in the following manner: "I think, sir, it is high time to inform you of the business of my embassy. I am a traveller, and am passing this way in company with two young people, a lad and a damsel, my parishioners, toward my own cure; we stopped at a house of hospitality in the parish, where they directed me to you as having the cure." "Though I am but a curate," says Trulliber, "I believe I am as warm as the vicar himself, or perhaps the rector of the next parish, too; I believe I could buy them both." "Sir," cries Adams, "I rejoice thereat. Now, sir, my business is that we are by various accidents stripped of our money, and are not able to pay our reckoning, being seven shillings. I therefore request you to assist me with the loan of those seven shillings, and also seven shillings more, which, peradventure, I shall return to you; but if not, I am convinced you will joyfully embrace such an opportunity of laying up a treasure in a better place than this world affords."

Suppose a stranger who entered the chambers of a lawyer, being imagined a client, when the lawyer was preparing his palm for the fee, should pull out a writ against him. Suppose an apothecary, at the door of a chariot containing some greater doctor of eminent skill, should, instead of directions to a patient, present him with a potion

for himself. Suppose a minister should, instead of a good round sum, treat my lord — , or sir ——, or squire ——, with a good broomstick. Suppose a civil companion, or a led captain, should, instead of virtue, and beauty, and parts, and admiration, thunder vice, and infamy, and ugliness, and folly, and contempt, in his patron's ears. Suppose, when a tradesman first carries in his bill, the man of fashion should pay it; or suppose, if he did so, the tradesman should abate what he had overcharged on the supposition of waiting. In short—suppose what you will, you never can nor will suppose anything equal to the astonishment which seized on Trulliber as soon as Adams had ended his speech. Awhile he rolled his eyes in silence, sometimes surveying Adams, then his wife; then casting them on the ground, then lifting them up to heaven. At last he burst forth in the following accents:

"Sir, I believe I know where to lay up my little treasure as well as another; I thank God, if I am not so warm as some, I am content; that is a blessing greater than riches; and he, to whom that is given, need ask no more. To be content with a little is greater than to possess the world; which a man may possess without being so. Lay up my treasure! What matters where a man's treasure is whose heart is in the Scriptures? There is the treasure of a Christian."

At these words the water ran from Adams's eyes; and, catching Trulliber by the hand in a rapture, "Brother," says he, "Heavens bless the accident by which I came to see you! I would have walked many a mile to have communed with you; and believe me, I will shortly pay you a second visit; but my friends, I fancy, by this time wonder at my stay; so let me have the money immediately."

Trulliber then put on a stern look, and cried out, "Thou dost not intend to rob me?" At which the wife, bursting

into tears, fell on her knees, and roared out, "Oh, dear sir! for Heaven's sake don't rob my master; we are but poor people." "Get up for a fool, as thou art, and go about thy business," said Trulliber; "dost think the man will venture his life? He is a beggar, and no robber." "Very true, indeed," answered Adams. "I wish with all my heart the tithing-man was here," cries Trulliber; "I would have thee punished as a vagabond for thy impudence. Fourteen shillings, indeed! I won't give thee a farthing. I believe thou art no more a clergyman than the woman there" (pointing to his wife); "but if thou art, dost deserve to have thy gown stripped over thy shoulders, for running about the country in such a manner."

"I forgive your suspicions," says Adams; "but suppose I am not a clergyman, I am nevertheless thy brother; and thou, as a Christian, much more as a clergyman, art obliged to relieve my distress." "Dost preach to me?" replied Trulliber; "dost pretend to instruct me in my duty?" "Ifacks, a good story," cries Mrs. Trulliber, "to preach to my master!" "Silence, woman!" cries Trulliber; "I would have thee know, friend," addressing himself to Adams, "I shall not learn my duty from such as thee. I know what charity is, better than to give to vagabonds." "Besides, if we were inclined, the poor's rate obliges us to give so much charity," cries the wife. "Pugh! thou art a fool. Poor's rate! Hold thy nonsense," answered Trulliber; and then, turning to Adams, he told him he would give him nothing. "I am sorry," answered Adams, "that you do not know what charity is, since you practise it no better; I must tell you if you trust to your knowledge for your justification you will find yourself deceived, though you should add faith to it, without good works."

"Fellow," cries Trulliber, "dost thou speak against faith in my house? Get out of my doors; I will no longer re-

main under the same roof with a wretch who speaks wantonly of faith and the Scriptures." "Name not the Scriptures," says Adams. "How! not name the Scriptures? Do you disbelieve the Scriptures?" cries Trulliber. "No; but you do," answered Adams, "if I may reason from your practice; for their commands are so explicit, and their rewards and punishments so immense, that it is impossible a man should steadfastly believe without obeying. Now there is no command more express, no duty more frequently enjoined, than charity. Whoever, therefore, is void of charity, I make no scruple of pronouncing that he is no Christian."

"I would not advise thee," says Trulliber, "to say that I am no Christian; I won't take it of you; for I believe I am as good a man as thyself"; and, indeed, though he was now rather too corpulent for athletic exercises, he had, in his youth, been one of the best boxers and cudgel-players in the county. His wife, seeing him clinch his fist, interposed, and begged him not to fight, but show himself a true Christian and take the law of him. As nothing could provoke Adams to strike but an absolute assault on himself or his friend, he smiled at the angry look and gestures of Trulliber; and, telling him he was sorry to see such men in orders, departed without further ceremony.

## Literary Affectations[1]

*Tobias Smollett* (1721–1771)

TO SIR WATKIN PHILLIPS, OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXON

London, *June* 10.

Dear Phillips: In my last I mentioned my having spent an evening with a society of authors, who seemed to

[1] From *Humphry Clinker*.

be jealous and afraid of one another. My uncle was not at all surprised to hear me say I was disappointed in their conversation. "A man may be very entertaining and instructive on paper," said he, "and exceedingly dull in common discourse. I have observed, that those who shine most in private company are but secondary stars in the constellation of genius. A small stock of ideas is more easily managed, and sooner displayed, than a great quantity crowded together. There is very seldom anything extraordinary in the appearance and address of a good writer; whereas a dull author generally distinguishes himself by some oddity or extravagance. For this reason, I fancy that an assembly of grubs must be very diverting."

My curiosity being excited by this hint, I consulted my friend Dick Ivy, who undertook to gratify it the very next day, which was Sunday last. He carried me to dine with S——, whom you and I have long known by his writings. He lives in the skirts of the town, and every Sunday his house is open to all unfortunate brothers of the quill, whom he treats with beef, pudding, and potatoes, port, punch, and Calvert's entire butt-beer. He has fixed on the first day of the week for the exercise of his hospitality, because some of his guests could not enjoy it on any other, for reasons that I need not explain. I was civilly received, in a plain yet decent habitation, which opened backward into a very pleasant garden, kept in excellent order; and, indeed, I saw none of the outward signs of authorship, either in the house or the landlord, who is one of those few writers of the age that stand on their own foundation, without patronage, and above dependence. If there was nothing characteristic in the entertainer, the company made ample amends for his want of singularity.

At two in the afternoon I found myself one of ten mess-

mates seated at table; and I question if the whole world could produce such another assemblage of originals. Among their peculiarities I do not mention those of dress, which may be purely accidental. What struck me were oddities originally produced by affectation, and afterward confirmed by habit. One of them wore spectacles at dinner, and another his hat flapped; though, as Ivy told me, the first was noted for having a seaman's eye when a bailiff was in the wind; and the other was never known to labor under any weakness or defect of vision except about five years ago, when he was complimented with a couple of black eyes by a player with whom he had quarrelled in his drink. A third wore a laced stocking, and made use of crutches, because, once in his life, he had been laid up with a broken leg, though no man could leap over a stick with more agility. A fourth had contracted such an antipathy to the country that he insisted on sitting with his back toward the window that looked into the garden; and when a dish of cauliflower was set on the table he snuffed up volatile salts to keep him from fainting; yet this delicate person was the son of a cottager, born under a hedge, and had many years run wild among asses on a common. A fifth affected distraction; when spoke to he always answered from the purpose; sometimes he suddenly started up, and rapped out a dreadful oath; sometimes he burst out a-laughing; then he folded his arms and sighed; and then he hissed like fifty serpents.

At first I really thought he was mad, and, as he sat near me, began to be under some apprehensions for my own safety, when our landlord, perceiving me alarmed, assured me, aloud, that I had nothing to fear. "The gentleman," said he, "is trying to act a part for which he is by no means qualified; if he had all the inclination in the world it is not in his power to be mad. His spirits are too flat

to be kindled into frenzy." "'Tis no bad p-p-puff, how-ow-ever," observed a person in a tarnished laced coat, "aff-affected m-madness w-will p-pass for w-wit w-with nine-nine-teen out of t-twenty." "And affected stuttering for humour," replied our landlord; "though, God knows, there is no affinity betwixt them." It seems this wag, after having made some abortive attempts in plain speaking, had recourse to this defect, by means of which he frequently extorted the laugh of the company, without the least expense of genius; and that imperfection, which he had at first counterfeited, was now become so habitual that he could not lay it aside.

A certain winking genius, who wore yellow gloves at dinner, had, on his first introduction, taken such offence at S—— because he looked and talked, and ate and drank, like any other man, that he spoke contemptuously of his understanding ever after, and never would repeat his visit, until he had exhibited the following proof of his caprice: Wat Wyvil, the poet, having made some unsuccessful advances toward an intimacy with S——, at last gave him to understand, by a third person, that he had written a poem in his praise, and a satire against his person; that, if he would admit him to his house, the first should be immediately sent to the press; but that, if he persisted in declining his friendship, he would publish the satire without delay. S—— replied that he looked on Wyvil's panegyric as, in effect, a species of infamy, and would resent it accordingly with a good cudgel; but if he published the satire he might deserve his compassion, and had nothing to fear from his revenge. Wyvil, having considered the alternative, resolved to mortify S—— by printing the panegyric, for which he received a sound drubbing; then he swore the peace against the aggressor, who, in order to avoid a prosecution at law, admitted him to his good graces.

It was the singularity in S——'s conduct on this occasion that reconciled him to the yellow-gloved philosopher, who owned he had some genius, and from that period cultivated his acquaintance.

Curious to know on what subjects the several talents of my fellow-guests were employed, I applied to my communicative friend Dick Ivy, who gave me to understand that most of them were, or had been, understrappers or journeymen to more creditable authors, for whom they translated, collated, and compiled, in the business of bookmaking; and that all of them had, at different times, laboured in the service of our landlord, though they had now set up for themselves in various departments of literature. Not only their talents, but also their nations and dialects, were so various, that our conversation resembled the confusion of tongues at Babel.

We had the Irish brogue, the Scotch accent, and foreign idiom twanged off by the most discordant vociferation; for, as they all spoke together, no man had any chance to be heard, unless he could bawl louder than his fellows. It must be owned, however, there was nothing pedantic in their discourse; they carefully avoided all learned disquisitions, and endeavoured to be facetious: nor did their endeavours always miscarry. Some droll repartee passed, and much laughter was excited: and if any individual lost his temper so far as to transgress the bounds of decorum he was effectually checked by the master of the feast, who exerted a sort of paternal authority over this irritable tribe.

The most learned philosopher of the whole collection, who had been expelled the university for atheism, has made great progress in a refutation of Lord Bolingbroke's metaphysical works, which is said to be equally ingenious and orthodox; but, in the mean time, he has been presented

to the grand jury as a public nuisance for having blasphemed in an alehouse on the Lord's day. The Scotchman gives lectures on the pronunciation of the English language, which he is now publishing by subscription.

The Irishman is a political writer, and goes by the name of my Lord Potato. He wrote a pamphlet in vindication of a minister, hoping his zeal would be rewarded with some place or pension; but, finding himself neglected in that quarter, he whispered about that the pamphlet was written by the minister himself, and he published an answer to his own production. In this he addressed the author under the title of your lordship with such solemnity that the public swallowed the deceit, and bought up the whole impression. The wise politicians of the metropolis declared they were both masterly performances, and chuckled over the flimsy reveries of an ignorant garretteer as the profound speculations of a veteran statesman acquainted with all the secrets of the cabinet. The imposture was detected in the sequel; and our Hibernian pamphleteer retains no part of his assumed importance but the bare title of—my lord, and the upper part of the table at the potato-ordinary in Shoe-lane.

Opposite to me sat a Piedmontese, who had obliged the public with a humourous satire, entitled "The Balance of the English Poets," a performance which evinced the great modesty and taste of the author, and, in particular, his intimacy with the elegances of the English language. The sage who laboured under the *ἀγροφοβία*, or *horror of green fields*, had just finished a treatise on practical agriculture, though, in fact, he had never seen corn growing in his life; and was so ignorant of grain that our entertainer, in the face of the whole company, made him own that a plate of hominy was the best rice-pudding he had ever eaten.

The stutterer had almost finished his travels through Europe and part of Asia, without ever budging beyond the liberties of the King's Bench, except in term-time, with a tipstaff for his companion; and as for little Tim Cropdale, the most facetious member of the whole society, he had happily wound up the catastrophe of a virgin tragedy, from the exhibition of which he promised himself a large fund of profit and reputation. Tim had made shift to live many years by writing novels, at the rate of five pounds a volume; but that branch of business is now engrossed by female authors, who publish merely for the propagation of virtue, with so much ease, and spirit, and delicacy, and knowledge of the human heart, and all in the serene tranquillity of high life, that the reader is not only enchanted by their genius, but reformed by their morality.

After dinner we adjourned into the garden, where, I observed, Mr. S—— gave a short separate audience to every individual, in a small remote filbert walk, from whence most of them dropped off one after another, without further ceremony; but they were replaced by fresh recruits of the same clan, who came to make an afternoon's visit; and, among others, a spruce bookseller, called Birkin, who rode his own gelding, and made his appearance in a pair of new jemmy boots, with massy spurs of plate. It was not without reason that this midwife of the muses used exercise a-horseback, for he was too fat to walk afoot; and he underwent some sarcasms from Tim Cropdale on his unwieldy size and inaptitude for motion. Birkin, who took umbrage at this poor author's petulance in presuming to joke on a man so much richer than himself, told him he was not so unwieldy but that he could move the Marshalsea court for a writ, and even overtake him with it, if he did not very speedily come and settle accounts with him respecting the expense of publishing his last ode to the King

of Prussia, of which he had sold but three, and one of them was to Whitfield the Methodist. Tim affected to receive this intimation with good humour, saying he expected in a post or two, from Potsdam, a poem of thanks from his Prussian Majesty, who knew very well how to pay poets in their own coin; but, in the mean time, he proposed that Mr. Birkin and he should run three times round the garden for a bowl of punch, to be drunk at Ashley's in the evening, and he would boots against stockings. The bookseller, who valued himself on his mettle, was persuaded to accept the challenge; and he forthwith resigned his boots to Cropdale, who, when he had put them on, was no bad representation of Captain Pistol in the play.

Everything being adjusted, they started together with great impetuosity; and, in the second round, Birkin had clearly the advantage, "larding the lean earth as he puff'd along." Cropdale had no mind to contest the victory farther, but in a twinkling disappeared through the back door of the garden, which opened into a private lane that had communication with the highroad. The spectators immediately began to halloo—"Stole away!" and Birkin set off in pursuit of him with great eagerness; but he had not advanced twenty yards in the lane, when a thorn, running into his foot, sent him hopping back into the garden roaring with pain, and swearing with vexation. When he was delivered from this annoyance by the Scotchman, who had been bred to surgery, he looked about him wildly, exclaiming, "Sure the fellow won't be such a rogue as to run away with my boots!" Our landlord having reconnoitred the shoes he had left, which indeed hardly deserved that name, "Pray," said he, "Mr. Birkin, wa'n't your boots made of calfskin?" "Calfskin or cowskin," replied the other, "I'll find a slip of sheepskin that will do his business. I lost twenty pounds by his farce, which you

persuaded me to buy. I am out of pocket five pounds by his d——d ode; and now this pair of boots, brand new, cost me thirty shillings, as per receipt. But this affair of the boots is felony—transportation. I'll have the dog indicted at the Old Bailey—I will, Mr. S——. I will be revenged, even though I should lose my debt in consequence of his conviction."

Mr. S—— said nothing at present, but accommodated him with a pair of shoes; then ordered his servant to rub him down, and comfort him with a glass of rum-punch, which seemed in a great measure to cool the rage of his indignation. "After all," said our landlord, "this is no more than a humbug in the way of wit, though it deserves a more respectable epithet, when considered as an effort of invention. Tim being, I suppose, out of credit with the cordwainer, fell on this ingenious expedient to supply the want of shoes, knowing that Mr. Birkin, who loves humour, would himself relish the joke on a little recollection. Cropdale literally lives by his wit, which he has exercised on all his friends in their turns. He once borrowed my pony for five or six days to go to Salisbury, and sold him in Smithfield at his return. This was a joke of such a serious nature that, in the first transports of my passion, I had some thoughts of prosecuting him for horse-stealing; and, even when my resentment had in some measure subsided, as he industriously avoided me, I vowed I would take satisfaction on his ribs with the first opportunity. One day, seeing him at some distance in the street, coming toward me, I began to prepare my cane for action, and walked in the shadow of a porter, that he might not perceive me soon enough to make his escape; but, in the very instant I had lifted up the instrument of correction, I found Cropdale metamorphosed into a miserable blind wretch, feeling his way with a long stick from post to post, and rolling about

two bald, unlighted orbs instead of eyes. I was exceedingly shocked at having so narrowly escaped the concern and disgrace that would have attended such a misapplication of vengeance; but, next day, Tim prevailed on a friend of mine to come and solicit my forgiveness, and offer his note, payable in six weeks, for the price of the pony. This gentleman gave me to understand that the blind man was no other than Cropdale, who, having seen me advancing, and guessing my intent, had immediately converted himself into the object aforesaid. I was so diverted at the ingenuity of the evasion, that I agreed to pardon his offence, refusing his note, however, that I might keep a prosecution for felony hanging over his head as a security for his future good behaviour; but Timothy would by no means trust himself in my hands till the note was accepted. Then he made his appearance at my door as a blind beggar, and imposed in such a manner on my man, who had been his old acquaintance and pot-companion, that the fellow threw the door in his face, and even threatened to give him the bastinado. Hearing a noise in the hall, I went thither, and immediately recollecting the figure I had passed in the street, accosted him by his own name, to the unspeakable astonishment of the footman."

Birkin declared he loved a joke as well as another; but asked if any of the company could tell where Mr. Cropdale lodged, that he might send him a proposal about restitution, before the boots should be made away with. "I would willingly give him a pair of new shoes," said he, "and half a guinea into the bargain for the boots, which fitted me like a glove, and I sha'n't be able to get the fellows of them till the good weather for riding is over." The stuttering wit declared that the only secret which Cropdale ever kept was the place of his lodgings; but he believed that during the heats of summer, he commonly took his repose

on a bulk, or indulged himself, *in fresco*, with one of the kennel-nymphs, under the portico of St. Martin's church. "P—— on him!" cried the bookseller; "he might as well have taken my whip and spurs. In that case he might have been tempted to steal another horse, and then he would have rid to the devil, of course."

After coffee I took my leave of Mr. S——, with proper acknowledgments of his civility, and was extremely well pleased with the entertainment of the day, though not yet satisfied with respect to the nature of this connection betwixt a man of character in the literary world and a parcel of authorlings, who, in all probability, would never be able to acquire any degree of reputation by their labors. On this head I interrogated my conductor, Dick Ivy, who answered me to this effect: "One would imagine S—— had some view to his own interest in giving countenance and assistance to those people whom he knows to be bad men as well as bad writers; but, if he has any such view, he will find himself disappointed; for if he is so vain as to imagine he can make them subservient to his schemes of profit or ambition, they are cunning enough to make him their property in the mean time. There is not one of the company you have seen to-day, myself excepted, who does not owe him particular obligations. One of them he bailed out of a sponging-house, and afterward paid the debt; another he translated into his family and clothed, when he was turned out, half naked, from jail, in consequence of an act for the relief of insolvent debtors; a third, who was reduced to a woollen night-cap, and lived on sheep's trotters, up three pair of stairs backward, in Butcher-row, he took into present pay and free quarters, and enabled him to appear as a gentleman, without having the fear of sheriff's officers before his eyes. Those who are in distress he supplies with money when he has it, and with his credit

when he is out of cash. When they want business, he either finds them employment in his own service, or recommends them to booksellers, to execute some project he has formed for their subsistence. They are always welcome to his table, which, though plain, is plentiful, and to his good offices, as far as they will go; and, when they see occasion, they make use of his name with the most petulant familiarity; nay, they do not even scruple to arrogate to themselves the merit of some of his performances, and have been known to sell their own lucubrations as the produce of his brain. The Scotchman you saw at dinner once personated him at an alehouse in West Smithfield, and, in the character of S——, had his head broke by a cow-keeper for having spoken disrespectfully of the Christian religion; but he took the law of him in his own person, and the assailant was fain to give him ten pounds to withdraw his action."

I observed that all this appearance of liberality on the side of Mr. S—— was easily accounted for, on the supposition that they flattered him in private, and engaged his adversaries in public; and yet I was astonished when I recollected that I had often seen this writer virulently abused, in papers, poems, and pamphlets, and not a pen was drawn in his defence. "But, you will be more astonished," said he, "when I assure you those very guests whom you saw at his table to-day were the authors of great part of that abuse; and he himself is well aware of their particular favours, for they are all eager to detect and betray one another." "But this is doing the devil's work for nothing," cried I; "what should induce them to revile their benefactor without provocation?" "Envy," answered Dick, "is the general incitement; but they are galled by an additional scourge of provocation. S—— directs a literary journal, in which their productions are necessarily brought

to trial; and though many of them have been treated with such lenity and favour as they little deserved, yet the slightest censure, such as perhaps could not be avoided, with any pretensions to candour and impartiality, has rankled in the hearts of those authors to such a degree that they have taken immediate vengeance on the critic, in anonymous libels, letters, and lampoons. Indeed, all the writers of the age, good, bad, and indifferent, from the moment he assumed this office, became his enemies, either professed or *in petto*, except those of his friends who knew they had nothing to fear from his strictures; and he must be a wiser man than I who can tell what advantage or satisfaction he derives from having brought such a nest of hornets about his ears."

I owned that was a point which might deserve consideration; but still I expressed a desire to know his real motives for continuing his friendship to a set of rascals equally ungrateful and insignificant. He said he did not pretend to assign any reasonable motive; that, if the truth must be told, the man was, in point of conduct, a most incorrigible fool; that, though he pretended to have a knack at hitting off characters, he blundered strangely in the distribution of his favours, which were generally bestowed on the most undeserving of those who had recourse to his assistance; that, indeed, this preference was not so much owing to a want of discernment as to want of resolution; for he had not fortitude enough to resist the importunity even of the most worthless; and, as he did not know the value of money, there was very little merit in parting with it so easily; that his pride was gratified in seeing himself courted by such a number of literary dependents; that, probably, he delighted in hearing them expose and traduce one another; and, finally, from their information he became acquainted with all the transactions of Grub Street,

which he had some thoughts of compiling for the entertainment of the public.

I could not help suspecting, from Dick's discourse, that he had some particular grudge against S——, on whose conduct he had put the worst construction it would bear; and by dint of cross-examination I found he was not at all satisfied with the character which had been given in the review of his last performance, though it had been treated civilly, in consequence of the author's application to the critic. By all accounts S—— is not without weakness and caprice; but he is certainly good-humoured and civilized; nor do I find that there is anything overbearing, cruel, or implacable in his disposition.

I have dwelt so long on authors that you will perhaps suspect I intend to enroll myself among the fraternity; but, if I were actually qualified for the profession, it is at best but a desperate resource against starving, as it affords no provision for old age and infirmity. Salmon, at the age of fourscore, is now in a garret compiling matter, at a guinea a sheet, for a modern historian, who, in point of age, might be his grandchild; and Psalmonazar, after having drudged half a century in the literary mill, in all the simplicity and abstinence of an Asiatic, subsists on the charity of a few booksellers just sufficient to keep him from the parish. I think Guy, who was himself a bookseller, ought to have appropriated one wing or ward of his hospital to the use of decayed authors, though, indeed, there is neither hospital, college, nor workhouse within the bills of mortality large enough to contain the poor of this society, composed as it is from the refuse of every other profession.

## Fortune Humbles the Family of Wakefield[1]

*Oliver Goldsmith* (1728–1774)

When we were returned home the night was dedicated to schemes of future conquest. Deborah exerted much sagacity in conjecturing which of the two girls was likely to have the best place and most opportunities of seeing good company. The only obstacle to our preferment was in obtaining the Squire's recommendation; but he had already shown us too many instances of his friendship to doubt of it now. Even in bed my wife kept up the usual theme: "Well, faith, my dear Charles, between ourselves, I think we have made an excellent day's work of it." "Pretty well!" cried I, not knowing what to say. "What, only pretty well!" returned she; "I think it is very well. Suppose the girls should come to make acquaintances of taste in town! This I am assured of, that London is the only place in the world for all manner of husbands. Besides, my dear, stranger things happen every day; and as ladies of quality are so taken with my daughters, what will not men of quality be? Entre nous, I protest I like my Lady Blarney vastly—so very obliging. However, Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs has my warm heart. But yet, when they came to talk of places in town, you saw at once how I nailed them. Tell me, my dear, don't you think I did for my children there?" "Ay," returned I, not knowing well what to think of the matter. "Heaven grant they may be both the better for it this day three months!" This was one of those observations I usually made to impress my wife with an opinion of my sagacity; for if the girls succeeded, then it was a pious

[1] From *The Vicar of Wakefield.*

wish fulfilled; but if anything unfortunate ensued, then it might be looked upon as a prophecy. All this conversation, however, was only preparatory to another scheme; and indeed I dreaded as much. This was nothing less than that, as we were now to hold up our heads a little higher in the world, it would be proper to sell the colt, which was grown old, at a neighbouring fair and buy us a horse that would carry a single or double upon an occasion, and make a pretty appearance at church, or upon a visit. This at first I opposed stoutly; but it was stoutly defended. However, as I weakened, my antagonist gained strength, till at last it was resolved to part with him.

As the fair happened on the following day, I had intentions of going myself; but my wife persuaded me that I had got a cold, and nothing could prevail upon her to permit me from home. "No, my dear," said she, "our son Moses is a discreet boy, and can buy and sell to a very good advantage; you know all our great bargains are of his purchasing. He always stands out and higgles, and actually tires them till he gets a bargain."

As I had some opinion of my son's prudence, I was willing enough to intrust him with this commission, and the next morning I perceived his sisters mighty busy in fitting out Moses for the fair; trimming his hair, brushing his buckles, and cocking his hat with pins. The business of the toilet being over, we had at last the satisfaction of seeing him mounted upon the colt, with a deal box before him to bring home groceries in. He had on a coat made of that cloth they call thunder-and-lightning, which, though grown too short, was much too good to be thrown away. His waistcoat was of a gosling green, and his sisters had tied his hair with a broad, black ribbon. We all followed him several paces from the door, bawling after him, "Good luck! good luck!" till we could see him no longer.

He was scarce gone, when Mr. Thornhill's butler came to congratulate us upon our good fortune, saying that he overheard his young master mention our names with great commendation.

Good fortune seemed resolved not to come alone. Another footman from the same family followed, with a card for my daughters, importing that the two ladies had received such pleasing accounts from Mr. Thornhill of us all that after a few previous inquiries they hoped to be perfectly satisfied. "Ay," cried my wife, "I now see it is no easy matter to get into the families of the great; but when one once gets in, then, as Moses says, one may go to sleep." To this piece of humour, for she intended it for wit, my daughters assented with a loud laugh of pleasure. In short, such was her satisfaction at this message that she actually put her hand in her pocket and gave the messenger sevenpence halfpenny.

This was to be our visiting day. The next that came was Mr. Burchell, who had been at the fair. He brought my little ones a pennyworth of gingerbread each, which my wife undertook to keep for them, and give them by letters at a time. He brought my daughters also a couple of boxes in which they might keep wafers, snuff, patches, or even money, when they got it. My wife was usually fond of a weasel-skin purse, as being the most lucky; but this by-the-bye. We had still a regard for Mr. Burchell, though his late rude behaviour was in some measure displeasing; nor could we now avoid communicating our happiness to him, and asking his advice; although we seldom followed advice, we were all ready enough to ask it. When he read the note from the two ladies he shook his head and observed that an affair of this sort demanded the utmost circumspection. This air of diffidence highly displeased my wife. "I never doubted, sir," cried she, "your readiness

to be against my daughters and me. You have more circumspection than is wanted. However, I fancy when we come to ask advice we will apply to persons who seem to have made use of it themselves." "Whatever my own conduct may have been, madam," replied he, "is not the present question: though, as I have made no use of advice myself, I should in conscience give it to those that will." As I was apprehensive this answer might draw on a repartee, making up by abuse what it wanted in wit, I changed the subject, by seeming to wonder what could keep our son so long at the fair, as it was now almost nightfall. "Never mind our son," cried my wife; "depend upon it he knows what he is about. I'll warrant we'll never see him sell his hen of a rainy day. I have seen him buy such bargains as would amaze one. I'll tell you a good story about that, that will make you split your sides with laughing. But, as I live, yonder comes Moses, without a horse, and the box at his back."

As she spoke Moses came slowly on foot, and sweating under the deal box, which he had strapped round his shoulders like a peddler. "Welcome, welcome, Moses! Well, my boy, what have you brought us from the fair?" "I have brought you myself," cried Moses, with a sly look, and resting the box on the dresser. "Ay, Moses," cried my wife, "that we know; but where is the horse?" "I have sold him," cried Moses, "for three pounds five shillings and twopence." "Well done, my good boy," returned she; "I knew you would touch them off. Between ourselves, three pounds five shillings and twopence is no bad day's work. Come, let us have it then." "I have brought back no money," cried Moses again. "I have laid it all out in a bargain, and here it is," pulling out a bundle from his breast; "here they are: a gross of green spectacles with silver rims and shagreen cases." "A gross of green spec-

tacles?" repeated my wife, in a faint voice. "And you have parted with the colt, and brought us back nothing but a gross of green paltry spectacles?" "Dear mother," cried the boy, "why won't you listen to reason? I had them a dead bargain, or I should not have brought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money." "A fig for the silver rims!" cried my wife, in a passion. "I dare swear they won't sell for above half the money at the rate of broken silver, five shillings an ounce." "You need be under no uneasiness," cried I, "about selling the rims, for they are not worth sixpence; for I perceive they are only copper varnished over." "What!" cried my wife, "not silver? the rims not silver?" "No," cried I, "no more silver than your saucepan." "And so," returned she, "we have parted with the colt, and have only got a gross of green spectacles, with copper rims and shagreen cases? A murrain take such trumpery! The blockhead has been imposed upon, and should have known his company better." "There, my dear," cried I, "you are wrong; he should not have known them at all." "Marry, hang the idiot!" returned she, "to bring me such stuff; if I had them I would throw them in the fire." "There again you are wrong, my dear," cried I; "for though they be copper, we will keep them by us, as copper spectacles, you know, are better than nothing."

By this time the unfortunate Moses was undeceived. He now saw that he had been imposed upon by a prowling sharper, who, observing his figure, had marked him for an easy prey. I therefore asked the circumstances of his deception. He sold the horse, it seems, and walked the fair in search of another. A reverend-looking man brought him to a tent, under pretence of having one to sell. "Here," continued Moses, "we met another man, very well dressed, who desired to borrow twenty pounds upon these, saying

that he wanted money, and would dispose of them for a third of the value. The first gentleman, who pretended to be my friend, whispered me to buy them, and cautioned me not to let so good an offer pass. I sent for Mr. Flamborough, and they talked him up as finely as they did me; and so at last we were persuaded to buy the two gross between us."

## Mause Testifies[1]

*Sir Walter Scott* (1771–1832)

[Cuddie and his mother, with the Rev. Gabriel Kettledrummle, are the prisoners of Claverhouse.]

"The charter that I speak of," said Morton, "is common to the meanest Scotchman. It is that freedom from stripes and bondage which was claimed, as you may read in Scripture, by the Apostle Paul himself, and which every man who is free born is called upon to defend for his own sake and that of his countrymen."

"Hegh, sirs!" replied Cuddie, "it wad hae been lang or my Leddy Margaret, or my mither either, wad hae fund out sic a wise-like doctrine in the Bible! The tane was aye graning about giving tribute to Cæsar, and the tither is as daft wi' her Whiggery. I hae been clean spoilt, just wi' listening to twa blethering auld wives; but if I could get a gentleman that wad let me tak on to be his servant, I am confident I wad be a clean contrary creature; and I hope your honour will think on what I am saying if ye were ance fairly delivered out o' this house of bondage, and just take me to be your ain wally-de-shamble."

"My valet, Cuddie!" answered Morton. "Alas! that would be sorry preferment, even if we were at liberty."

[1] From *Old Mortality*.

"I ken what ye're thinking—that because I am landward-bred, I wad be bringing ye to disgrace afore folk; but ye maun ken I'm gey gleg at the uptak; there was never ony thing dune wi' hand but I learned gey readily, 'cepting reading, writing, and ciphering; but there's no the like o' me at the fit ba', and I can play wi' the broadsword as weel as Corporal Inglis there. I hae broken his head or now, for as massy as he's riding ahint us. And then ye'll no be gaun to stay in this country?" said he, stopping and interrupting himself.

"Probably not," replied Morton.

"Weel, I carena a boddle. Ye see I wad get my mither bestowed wi' her auld graning tittie, Auntie Meg, in the Gallowgate o' Glasgow, and then I trust they wad neither burn her for a witch, or let her fail for fau't o' fude, or hang her up for an auld Whig wife; for the provost, they say, is very regardfu' o' sic puir bodies. And then you and me wad gang and pouss our fortunes like the folk i' the daft auld tales about Jock the Giant-killer, and Valentine and Orson; and we wad come back to merry Scotland, as the sang says, and I wad tak to the stilts again, and turn sic furs on the bonny rigs o' Milnwood holms that it wad be worth a pint but to look at them."

"I fear," said Morton, "there is very little chance, my good friend Cuddie, of our getting back to our old occupation."

"Hout, sir—hout, sir," replied Cuddie, "it's aye gude to keep up a hardy heart, as broken a ship's come to land. But what's that I hear? Never stir, if my auld mither is na at the preaching again! I ken the sough o' her texts, that sound just like the wind blawing through the spence; and there's Kettledrummle setting to wark too. Lord-sake, if the sodgers anes get angry they'll murder them baith, and us for company!"

Their further conversation was in fact interrupted by a blatant noise which rose behind them, in which the voice of the preacher emitted, in unison with that of the old woman, tones like the grumble of a bassoon combined with the screaking of a cracked fiddle. At first the aged pair of sufferers had been contented to condole with each other in smothered expressions of complaint and indignation; but the sense of their injuries became more pungently aggravated as they communicated with each other, and they became at length unable to suppress their ire.

"Woe, woe, and a threefold woe unto you, ye bloody and violent persecutors!" exclaimed the Rev. Gabriel Kettledrummle. "Woe, and threefold woe unto you, even to the breaking of seals, the blowing of trumpets, and the pouring forth of vials!"

"Ay, ay; a black cast to a' their ill-faur'd faces, and the outside o' the loof to them at the last day!" echoed the shrill counter-tenor of Mause, falling in like the second part of a catch.

"I tell you," continued the divine, "that your rankings and your ridings, your neighings and your prancings, your bloody, barbarous, and inhuman cruelties, your benumbing, deadening, and debauching the conscience of poor creatures by oaths, soul-damning and self-contradictory, have arisen from earth to heaven like a foul and hideous outcry of perjury for hastening the wrath to come—hugh! hugh! hugh!"

"And I say," cried Mause in the same tone, and nearly at the same time, "that wi' this auld breath o' mine, and it's sair taen down wi' the asthmatics and this rough trot—"

"Deil gin they would gallop," said Cuddie, "wad it but gar her haud her tongue!"

"—Wi' this auld and brief breath," continued Mause,

"will I testify against the backslidings, defections, defalcations, and declinings of the land — against the grievances and the causes of wrath!"

"Peace, I pr'ythee—peace, good woman," said the preacher, who had just recovered from a violent fit of coughing, and found his own anathema borne down by Mause's better wind—"peace, and take not the word out of the mouth of a servant of the altar. I say, I uplift my voice and tell you, that before the play is played out—ay, before this very sun gaes down—ye sall learn that neither a desperate Judas, like your prelate Sharp that's gane to his place; nor a sanctuary-breaking Holofernes, like bloody-minded Claverhouse; nor an ambitious Diotrephes, like the lad Evandale; nor a covetous and warld-following Demas, like him they ca' Sergeant Bothwell, that makes every wife's plack and her meal-ark his ain; neither your carabines, nor your pistols, nor your broadswords, nor your horses, nor your saddles, bridles, surcingles, nose-bags, nor martingales, shall resist the arrows that are whetted and the bow that is bent against you!"

"That shall they never, I trow," echoed Mause. "Castaways are they ilk ane o' them; besoms of destruction, fit only to be flung into the fire when they have sweepit the filth out o' the Temple; whips of small cords, knotted for the chastisement of those wha like their warldly gudes and gear better than the Cross or the Covenant, but when that wark's done, only meet to mak latchets to the deil's brogues."

"Fiend hae me," said Cuddie, addressing himself to Morton; "if I dinna think our mither preaches as weel as the minister! But it's a sair pity o' his hoast, for it aye comes on just when he's at the best o't, and that lang routing he made air this morning is sair again him too. Deil an I care if he wad roar her dumb, and then he wad

hae't a' to answer for himsel'. It's lucky the road's rough, and the troopers are no taking muckle tent to what they say wi' the rattling o' the horses' feet; but an we were anes on saft grund we'll hear news o' a' this."

Cuddie's conjectures were but too true. The words of the prisoners had not been much attended to while drowned by the clang of horses' hoofs on a rough and stony road; but they now entered upon the moorlands, where the testimony of the two zealous captives lacked this saving accompaniment. And, accordingly, no sooner had their steeds begun to tread heath and greensward, and Gabriel Kettledrummle had again raised his voice with, "Also I uplift my voice like that of a pelican in the wilderness—"

"And I mine," had issued from Mause, "like a sparrow on the housetops—"

When "Hollo, ho!" cried the corporal from the rear; "rein up your tongues; the devil blister them, or I'll clap a martingale on them."

"I will not peace at the commands of the profane," said Gabriel.

"Nor I neither," said Mause, "for the bidding of no earthly potsherd, though it be painted as red as a brick from the Tower of Babel, and ca' itsel' a corporal."

"Halliday," cried the corporal, "hast got never a gag about thee, man? We must stop their mouths before they talk us all dead."

Ere any answer could be made, or any measure taken in consequence of the corporal's motion, a dragoon galloped toward Sergeant Bothwell, who was considerably ahead of the party he commanded. On hearing the orders which he brought, Bothwell instantly rode back to the head of his party, ordered them to close their files, to mend their pace, and to move with silence and precaution, as they would soon be in presence of the enemy.

## A Letter of Consolation[1]

*Jane Austen* (1775–1817)

[Mr. Bennet's daughter Lydia has eloped with an army man of notoriously bad character. Her father is in great distress, having had no news from her and being in doubt as to whether she is married. The Reverend Mr. Collins, who, on a former occasion, had proposed for the hand of Lydia's sister Elizabeth, and had been ignominiously refused, being himself now prosperously married, writes to offer his consolations to the family.]

"My dear Sir: I feel myself called upon, by our relationship, and my situation in life, to condole with you on the grievous affliction you are now suffering under, of which we were yesterday informed by a letter from Hertfordshire. Be assured, my dear sir, that Mrs. Collins and myself sincerely sympathize with you, and all your respectable family, in your present distress, which must be of the bitterest kind, because proceeding from a cause which no time can remove. No arguments shall be wanting, on my part, that can alleviate so severe a misfortune; or that may comfort you under a circumstance that must be of all others most afflicting to a parent's mind. The death of your daughter would have been a blessing in comparison of this. And it is the more to be lamented, because there is reason to suppose, as my dear Charlotte informs me, that this licentiousness of behaviour in your daughter has proceeded from a faulty degree of indulgence; though, at the same time, for the consolation of yourself and Mrs. Bennet, I am inclined to think that her own disposition must be naturally bad, or she could not be guilty of such

[1] From *Pride and Prejudice*.

an enormity, at so early an age. Howsoever that may be, you are grievously to be pitied, in which opinion I am not only joined by Mrs. Collins, but, likewise, by Lady Catherine and her daughter, to whom I have related the affair. They agree with me in apprehending that this false step in one daughter will be injurious to the fortunes of all the others, for who, as Lady Catherine herself condescendingly says, will connect themselves with such a family? And this consideration leads me, moreover, to reflect with augmented satisfaction on a certain event of last November; for, had it been otherwise, I must have been involved in all your sorrows and disgrace. Let me advise you, then, my dear sir, to console yourself as much as possible, to throw off your unworthy child from your affection forever, and leave her to reap the fruits of her own heinous offence.

"I am, dear sir, &c., &c."

## Miss Betsy Barker's Cow[1]

*Mrs. Gaskell* (1810–1865)

"Elegant economy!" How naturally one falls back into the phraseology of Cranford! There, economy was always "elegant," and money-spending always "vulgar and ostentatious"; a sort of sour grapism which made us very peaceful and satisfied. I never shall forget the dismay felt when a certain Captain Brown came to live at Cranford, and openly spoke about his being poor—not in a whisper to an intimate friend, the doors and windows being previously closed, but in the public street! in a loud military voice! alleging his poverty as a reason for not taking a particular house. The ladies of Cranford were

[1] From *Cranford*.

already rather moaning over the invasion of their territories by a man and a gentleman. He was a half-pay captain, and had obtained some situation on a neighbouring railroad, which had been vehemently petitioned against by the little town; and if, in addition to his masculine gender, and his connection with the obnoxious railroad, he was so brazen as to talk of being poor—why, then, indeed, he must be sent to Coventry. Death was as true and as common as poverty; yet people never spoke about that, loud out in the streets. It was a word not to be mentioned to ears polite. We had tacitly agreed to ignore that any with whom we associated on terms of visiting equality could ever be prevented by poverty from doing anything that they wished. If we walked to or from a party, it was because the night was *so* fine, or the air *so* refreshing, not because sedan chairs were expensive. If we wore prints, instead of summer silks, it was because we preferred a washing material; and so on, till we blinded ourselves to the vulgar fact that we were, all of us, people of very moderate means. Of course, then, we did not know what to make of a man who could speak of poverty as if it was not a disgrace. Yet, somehow, Captain Brown made himself respected in Cranford, and was called upon, in spite of all resolutions to the contrary. I was surprised to hear his opinions quoted as authority at a visit which I paid to Cranford about a year after he had settled in the town. My own friends had been among the bitterest opponents of any proposal to visit the Captain and his daughters only twelve months before; and now he was even admitted in the tabooed hours before twelve. True, it was to discover the cause of a smoking chimney, before the fire was lighted; but still Captain Brown walked up-stairs, nothing daunted, spoke in a voice too large for the room, and joked quite in the way of a tame man about the house.

He had been blind to all the small slights, and omissions of trivial ceremonies, with which he had been received. He had been friendly, though the Cranford ladies had been cool; he had answered small, sarcastic compliments in good faith; and with his manly frankness had overpowered all the shrinking which met him as a man who was not ashamed to be poor. And, at last, his excellent masculine common-sense, and his facility in devising expedients to overcome domestic dilemmas, had gained him an extraordinary place as authority among the Cranford ladies. He himself went on in his course, as unaware of his popularity as he had been of the reverse; and I am sure he was startled one day when he found his advice so highly esteemed as to make some counsel which he had given in jest to be taken in sober, serious earnest.

It was on this subject: An old lady had an Alderney cow, which she looked upon as a daughter. You could not pay the short quarter-of-an-hour call without being told of the wonderful milk or wonderful intelligence of this animal. The whole town knew and kindly regarded Miss Betsy Barker's Alderney; therefore great was the sympathy and regret when, in an unguarded moment, the poor cow tumbled into a lime-pit. She moaned so loudly that she was soon heard and rescued; but meanwhile the poor beast had lost most of her hair, and came out looking naked, cold, and miserable, in a bare skin. Everybody pitied the animal, though a few could not restrain their smiles at her droll appearance. Miss Betsy Barker absolutely cried with sorrow and dismay; and it was said she thought of trying a bath of oil. This remedy, perhaps, was recommended by some one of the number whose advice she asked; but the proposal, if ever it was made, was knocked on the head by Captain Brown's decided "Get her a flannel waistcoat and flannel drawers, ma'am, if you

wish to keep her alive. But my advice is, kill the poor creature at once."

Miss Betsy Barker dried her eyes and thanked the Captain heartily; she set to work, and by-and-by all the town turned out to see the Alderney meekly going to her pasture clad in dark-gray flannel. I have watched her myself many a time. Do you ever see cows dressed in gray flannel in London?

## A Small Fashionable Party[1]

*William Makepeace Thackeray* (1811–1863)

[Colonel Newcome, just returned from India, is introduced by his sister-in-law to London society.]

To push on in the crowd every male or female struggler must use his or her shoulders. If a better place than yours presents itself just beyond your neighbor, elbow him and take it. Look how a steadily purposed man or woman at court, at a ball, or exhibition, wherever there is a competition and a squeeze, gets the best place; the nearest the sovereign, if bent on kissing the royal hand; the closest to the grand-stand, if minded to go to Ascot; the best view and hearing of the Rev. Mr. Thumpington, when all the town is rushing to hear that exciting divine; the largest quantity of ice, champagne and seltzer, cold *pâté*, or other his or her favourite flesh-pot, if gluttonously minded, at a supper whence hundreds of people come empty away. A woman of the world will marry her daughter and have done with her, get her carriage, and be at home and asleep in bed, while a timid mamma has still her girl in the nursery, or is beseeching the servants in the cloakroom to

[1] From *The Newcomes.*

look for her shawls, with which some one else has whisked away an hour ago. What a man has to do in society is to assert himself. Is there a good place at table? Take it. At the Treasury or the Home Office? Ask for it. Do you want to go to a party to which you are not invited? Ask to be asked. Ask A, ask B, ask Mrs. C, ask everybody you know; you will be thought a bore; but you will have your way. What matters if you are considered obtrusive, provided that you obtrude? By pushing steadily, nine hundred and ninety-nine people in a thousand will yield to you. Only command persons, and you may be pretty sure that a good number will obey. How well your money will have been laid out, oh, gentle reader, who purchase this, and, taking the maxim to heart, follow it through life! You may be sure of success. If your neighbor's foot obstructs you, stamp on it; and do you suppose he won't take it away?

The proofs of the correctness of the above remarks I show in various members of the Newcome family. Here was a vulgar little woman, not clever nor pretty especially; meeting Mr. Newcome casually, she ordered him to marry her, and he obeyed, as he obeyed her in everything else which she chose to order through life. Meeting Colonel Newcome on the steps of her house, she orders him to come to her evening party; and though he has not been to an evening party for five-and-thirty years—though he has not been to bed the night before—though he has no mufti coat except one sent him out by Messrs. Stultz to India in the year 1821—he never once thinks of disobeying Mrs. Newcome's order, but is actually at her door at five minutes past ten, having arrayed himself, to the wonderment of Clive, and left the boy to talk to his friend and fellow-passenger, Mr. Binnie, who has just arrived from Portsmouth, who has dined with him, and who, by previ-

ous arrangement, has taken up his quarters at the same hotel.

This Stultz coat, a blue swallow-tail with yellow buttons, now wearing a tinge of their native copper, a very high velvet collar on a level with the tips of the Captain's ears, with a high waist, indicated by two lapels, and a pair of buttons high up in the wearer's back, a white waistcoat and scarlet under-waistcoat, and a pair of the never-failing duck trousers, complete Thomas Newcome's costume, along with the white hat in which we have seen him in the morning, and which was one of two dozen purchased by him some years since at public outcry, Burrumtollah. We have called him Captain purposely, while speaking of his coat, for he held that rank when the garment came out to him; and having been in the habit of considering it a splendid coat for twelve years past, he has not the least idea of changing his opinion.

Doctor McGuffog, Professor Bodgers, Count Poski, and all the lions present at Mrs. Newcome's *réunion* that evening, were completely eclipsed by Colonel Newcome. The worthy soul, who cared not the least about adorning himself, had a handsome diamond brooch of the year 1801—given him by poor Jack Cutler, who was knocked over by his side at Argaum, and wore this ornament in his desk for a thousand days and nights at a time—in his shirt-frill, on such parade evenings as he considered Mrs. Newcome's to be. The splendour of this jewel, and of his flashing buttons, caused all eyes to turn to him. There were many pairs of moustachios present; those of Professor Schnurr, a very corpulent martyr just escaped from Spandau, and of Maximilien Tranchard, French exile and apostle of liberty, were the only whiskers in the room capable of vying in interest with Colonel Newcome's. Polish chieftains were at this time so common in London that nobody

(except one noble Member for Marylebone, and, once a year, the Lord Mayor) took any interest in them. The general opinion was that the stranger was the Wallachian Boyar, whose arrival at Mivart's the *Morning Post* had just announced. Mrs. Miles, whose delicious every other Wednesdays in Montagu Square are supposed by some to be rival entertainments to Mrs. Newcome's alternate Thursdays in Bryanstone Square, pinched her daughter Mira, engaged in a polyglot conversation with Herr Schnurr, Signor Carabossi, the guitarist, and Monsieur Pivier, the celebrated French chess-player, to point out the Boyar. Mira Miles wished she knew a little Moldavian, not so much that she might speak it, but that she might be heard to speak it. Mrs. Miles, who had not had the educational advantages of her daughter, simpered up with "Madame Newcome pas ici—votre excellence nouvellement arrivé—avez vous fait ung bong voyage? Je reçois chez moi Mercredi prochaing; lonnure de vous voir—Madamasel Miles ma fille"; and Mira, now reinforcing her mamma, poured in a glib little oration in French, somewhat to the astonishment of the Colonel, who began to think, however, that perhaps French was the language of the polite world, into which he was now making his very first entrée.

Mrs. Newcome had left her place at the door of her drawing-room to walk through her rooms with Rummun Loll, the celebrated Indian merchant, otherwise his Excellency Rummun Loll, otherwise his Highness Rummun Loll, the chief proprietor of the diamond mines in Golconda, with a claim of three millions and a half upon the East India Company—who smoked his hookah after dinner when the ladies were gone, and in whose honour (for his servants always brought a couple or more of hookahs with them) many English gentlemen made themselves sick while trying to emulate the same practice. Mr. Newcome had been obliged to go

to bed himself in consequence of the uncontrollable nausea produced by the chillum; and Doctor McGuffog, in hopes of converting his Highness, had puffed his till he was as black in the face as the interesting Indian—and now, having hung on his arm—always in the dirty gloves—flirting a fan while his Excellency consumed betel out of a silver box; and having promenaded him and his turban, and his shawls, and his kincob pelisse, and his lacquered moustache, and keen brown face and opal eyeballs, through her rooms, the hostess came back to her station at the drawing-room door.

As soon as his Excellency saw the Colonel, whom he perfectly well knew, his Highness's princely air was exchanged for one of the deepest humility. He bowed his head and put his two hands before his eyes, and came creeping toward him submissively, to the wonderment of Mrs. Miles, who was yet more astonished when the Moldavian magnate exclaimed in perfectly good English, "What, Rummun, you here?"

The Rummun, still bending and holding his hands before him, uttered a number of rapid sentences in the Hindustani language, which Colonel Newcome received, twirling his moustachios with much hauteur. He turned on his heel rather abruptly, and began to speak to Mrs. Newcome, who smiled and thanked him for coming—on his first night after his return.

The Colonel said, "To whose house should he first come but to his brother's?" How Mrs. Newcome wished she could have had room for him at dinner! And there was room after all, for Mr. Shaloony was detained at the House. The most interesting conversation. The Indian Prince was so intelligent!

"The Indian what?" asks Colonel Newcome. The heathen gentleman had gone off, and was seated by one

of the handsomest young women in the room, whose fair face was turned toward him, whose blond ringlets touched his shoulder, and who was listening to him as eagerly as Desdemona listened to Othello.

The Colonel's rage was excited as he saw the Indian's behaviour. He curled his moustachios up to his eyes in his wrath. "You don't mean that that man calls himself a Prince? That a fellow who wouldn't sit down in an officer's presence is . . ."

"How do you do, Mr. Honeyman? Eh, bong soir, monsieur. You are very late, Mr. Pressly. What! Barnes; is it possible that you do me the honour to come all the way from Mayfair to Marylebone? I thought you young men of fashion never crossed Oxford Street. Colonel Newcome, this is your nephew."

"How do you do, sir?" says Barnes, surveying the Colonel's costume with inward wonder, but without the least outward manifestation of surprise. "I suppose you dined here to meet the black Prince? I came to ask him and my uncle to meet you at dinner on Wednesday. Where's my uncle, ma'am?"

"Your uncle is gone to bed ill. He smoked one of those hookahs which the Prince brings, and it has made him very unwell indeed, Barnes. How is Lady Ann? Is Lord Kew in London? Is your sister better for Brighton air? I see your cousin is appointed Secretary of Legation. Have you good accounts of your aunt Lady Fanny?"

"Lady Fanny is as well as can be expected, and the baby is going on perfectly well, thank you," Barnes said, dryly; and his aunt, obstinately gracious with him, turned away to some other new-comer.

"It's interesting, isn't it, sir," said Barnes, turning to the Colonel, "to see such union in families? Whenever I come here my aunt trots out all my relations; and I send

a man round in the mornin' to ask how they all are. So Uncle Hobson is gone to bed sick with a hookah? I know there was a deuce of a row made when I smoked at Marble Head. You are promised to us for Wednesday, please. Is there anybody you would like to meet? Not our friend the Rummun? How the girls crowd round him! By Gad, a fellow who's rich may have the pick of any gal in London—not here—not in this sort of thing; I mean in society, you know," says Barnes, confidentially. "I've seen the old dowagers crowdin' round that fellow, and the girls snugglin' up to his india-rubber face. He's known to have two wives already in India; but, by Gad, for a settlement, I believe some of 'em here would marry—I mean of the girls in society."

"But isn't this society?" asked the Colonel.

"Oh, of course. It's very good society and that sort of thing—but it's not, you know—you understand? I give you my honour there are not three people in the room one meets anywhere, except the Rummun. What is he at home, sir? I know he ain't a Prince, you know, any more than I am."

"I believe he is a rich man now," said the Colonel. "He began from very low beginnings, and odd stories are told about the origin of his fortune."

"That may be," says the young man; "of course, as business men that's not our affair. But has he got the fortune? He keeps a large account with us; and, I think, wants to have larger dealings with us still. As one of the family we may ask you to stand by us, and tell us anything you know. My father has asked him down to Newcome, and we've taken him up; wisely or not I can't say; I think otherwise; but I'm quite young in the house, and, of course, the elders have the chief superintendence." The young man of business had dropped his drawl and his

languor, and was speaking quite unaffectedly, good-naturedly, and selfishly. Had you talked to him for a week you could not have made him understand the scorn and loathing with which the Colonel regarded him. Here was a young fellow as keen as the oldest curmudgeon; a lad with scarce a beard to his chin that would pursue his bond as rigidly as Shylock. "If he is like this at twenty, what will he be at fifty?" groaned the Colonel. "I'd rather Clive were dead than have him such a heartless worldling as this." And yet the young man's life was as good as that of other folks he lived with. You don't suppose he had any misgivings, provided he was in the city early enough in the morning; or slept badly unless he indulged too freely overnight; or had twinges of conscience that his life was misspent? He thought his life a most lucky and reputable one. He had a share in a good business, and felt that he could increase it. Some day he would marry a good match, with a good fortune; meanwhile he could take his pleasure decorously, and sow his wild oats as some of the young Londoners sow them, not broadcast after the fashion of careless, scatterbrained youth, but trimly and neatly, in quiet places, where the crop can come up unobserved, and be taken in without bustle or scandal. Barnes Newcome never missed going to church or dressing for dinner. He never kept a tradesman waiting for his money. He seldom drank too much, and never was late for business or huddled over his toilet, however brief had been his sleep, or severe his headache. In a word, he was as scrupulously whited as any sepulchre in the whole bills of mortality.

While young Barnes and his uncle were thus holding parley, a slim gentleman of bland aspect, with a roomy forehead, or what his female admirers called "a noble brow," and a neat white neck-cloth tied with clerical skill,

was surveying Colonel Newcome through his shining spectacles, and waiting for an opportunity to address him. The Colonel remarked the eagerness with which the gentleman in black regarded him, and asked Mr. Barnes who was the *padre?* Mr. Barnes turned his eyeglass toward the spectacles, and said, "He didn't know any more than the dead; he didn't know two people in the room." The spectacles nevertheless made the eyeglass a bow, of which the latter took no sort of cognizance. The spectacles advanced; Mr. Newcome fell back with a peevish exclamation of "Confound the fellow, what is he coming to speak to *me* for?" He did not choose to be addressed by all sorts of persons in all houses.

But he of the spectacles, with an expression of delight in his pale-blue eyes, and smiles dimpling his countenance, pressed onward with outstretched hands, and it was toward the Colonel he turned these smiles and friendly salutations. "Did I hear aright, sir, from Mrs. Miles," he said, "and have I the honour of speaking to Colonel Newcome?"

"The same, sir," says the Colonel, at which the other, tearing off a glove of lavender-coloured kid, uttered the words "Charles Honeyman," and seized the hand of his brother-in-law. "My poor sister's husband," he continued; "my own benefactor; Clive's father. How strange are these meetings in the mighty world! How I rejoice to see you, and know you!"

"You are Charles, are you?" cries the other. "I am very glad indeed to shake you by the hand, Honeyman. Clive and I should have beat up your quarters to-day, but we were busy until dinner-time. You put me in mind of poor Emma, Charles," he added, sadly. Emma had not been a good wife to him; a flighty, silly little woman, who had caused him when alive many a night of pain and day of anxiety.

"Poor, poor Emma!" exclaimed the ecclesiastic, casting his eyes toward the chandelier, and passing a white cambric pocket-handkerchief gracefully before them. No man in London understood the ring business or the pocket-handkerchief business better, or smothered his emotion more beautifully. "In the gayest moments, in the giddiest throng of fashion, the thoughts of the past will rise; the departed will be among us still. But this is not the strain wherewith to greet the friend newly arrived on our shores. How it rejoices me to behold you in Old England! How you must have joyed to see Clive!"

"D—— the humbug," muttered Barnes, who knew him perfectly well. "The fellow is always in the pulpit."

The incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's chapel smiled and bowed to him. "You do not recognize me, sir; I have had the honour of seeing you in your public capacity in the city when I have called at the bank, the bearer of my brother-in-law's generous—"

"Never mind that, Honeyman!" cried the Colonel.

"But I *do* mind, my dear Colonel," answers Mr. Honeyman. "I should be a very bad man, and a very ungrateful brother, if I *ever* forgot your kindness."

"For God's sake leave my kindness alone!"

"He'll never leave it alone as long as he can use it," muttered Mr. Barnes in his teeth; and turning to his uncle: "May I take you home, sir? My cab is at the door, and I shall be glad to drive you." But the Colonel said he must talk to his brother-in-law for a while; and Mr. Barnes, bowing very respectfully to him, slipped under a dowager's arm in the doorway and retreated silently down-stairs.

Newcome was now thrown entirely upon the clergyman, and the latter described the personages present to the stranger, who was curious to know how the party was

composed. Mrs. Newcome herself would have been pleased had she heard Honeyman's discourse regarding her guests and herself. Charles Honeyman so spoke of most persons that you might fancy they were listening over his shoulder. Such an assemblage of learning, genius, and virtue might well delight and astonish a stranger. "That lady in the red turban, with the handsome daughters, is Lady Budge, wife of the eminent judge of that name—everybody was astonished that he was not made chief-justice, and elevated to the peerage—the only objection (as I have heard confidentially) was on the part of a late sovereign, who said he never could consent to have a peer of the name of Budge. Her ladyship was of humble, I have heard even menial, station originally, but becomes her present rank, dispenses the most elegant hospitality at her mansion in Connaught Terrace, and is a pattern as a wife and a mother. The young man talking to her daughter is a young barrister, already becoming celebrated as a contributor to some of our principal reviews."

"Who is that cavalry officer in a white waistcoat talking to the Jew with the beard?" asks the Colonel.

"He—he! That cavalry officer is another literary man of celebrity, and by profession an attorney. But he has quitted the law for the Muses, and it would appear that the Nine are never wooed except by gentlemen with moustachios."

"Never wrote a verse in my life," says the Colonel, laughing, and stroking his own.

"For I remark so many literary gentlemen with that decoration. The Jew with the beard, as you call him, is Herr von Lungen, the eminent hautboy-player. The three next gentlemen are Mr. Smee, of the Royal Academy (who is shaved as you perceive), and Mr. Moyes and Mr. Cropper, who are both very hairy about the chin. At the piano,

singing, accompanied by Mademoiselle Lebrun, is Signor Mezzocaldo, the great baritone from Rome. Professor Quartz and Baron Hammerstein, celebrated geologists from Germany, are talking with their illustrious confrère, Sir Robert Craxton, in the door. Do you see yonder that stout gentleman, with snuff on his shirt? The eloquent Doctor McGuffog, of Edinburgh, talking to Doctor Ettore, who lately escaped from the Inquisition at Rome, in the disguise of a washerwoman, after undergoing the question several times, the rack, and the thumbscrew. They say that he was to have been burned in the Grand Square the next morning; but between ourselves, my dear Colonel, I mistrust these stories of converts and martyrs. Did you ever see a more jolly-looking man than Professor Schnurr, who was locked up in Spielberg, and got out up a chimney, and through a window? Had he waited a few months there are very few windows he could have passed through. That splendid man in the red fez is Kurbash Pasha—another renegade, I deeply lament to say—a hairdresser from Marseilles, by name Monsieur Ferchaud, who passed into Egypt and laid aside the *tongs* for the turban. He is talking with Mr. Palmer, one of our most delightful young poets, and with Desmond O'Tara, son of the late revered Bishop of Ballinafad, who has lately quitted ours for the errors of the Church of Rome. Let me whisper to you that your kinswoman is rather a searcher after what we call here *notabilities*. I heard talk of one I knew in better days—of one who was the comrade of my youth, and the delight of Oxford—poor Pidge of Brasenose, who got the Newdigate in my third year, and who, under his present name of Father Bartalo, was to have been here in his Capuchin dress, with a beard and bare feet; but I presume he could not get permission from his superior. That is Mr. Huff, the political economist, talking with Mr. Macduff,

the Member for Glenlivat. That is the coroner for Middlesex conversing with the great surgeon Sir Cutler Sharp, and that pretty little laughing girl talking with them is no other than the celebrated Miss Pinnifer, whose novel of *Ralph the Resurrectionist* created such a sensation after it was abused in the *Trimestrial Review*. It was a little bold certainly—I just looked at it at my club—after hours devoted to parish duty a clergyman is sometimes allowed, you know, *desipere in loco*—there are descriptions in it certainly startling—ideas about marriage not exactly orthodox; but the poor child wrote the book actually in the nursery, and all England was ringing with it before Doctor Pinnifer, her father, knew who was the author. That is the Doctor asleep in the corner by Miss Rudge, the American authoress, who, I dare say, is explaining to him the difference between the two governments. My dear Mrs. Newcome, I am giving my brother-in-law a little sketch of some of the celebrities who are crowding your salon tonight. What a delightful evening you have given us!"

"I try to do my best, Colonel Newcome," said the lady of the house. "I hope many a night we may see you here; and, as I said this morning, Clive, when he is of an age to appreciate this kind of entertainment. Fashion I do not worship. You may meet that among other branches of our family; but genius and talent I do reverence. And if I can be the means—the *humble* means—to bring men of genius together—mind to associate with mind—men of all nations to mingle in *friendly unison*—I shall not have lived *altogether* in vain. They call us women of the world *frivolous*, Colonel Newcome. So some may be; I do not say there are not in our own family persons who worship mere worldly rank, and think but of fashion and gayety; but such, I trust, will never be the objects in life of me and *my* children. We are but merchants; we seek to be

*no more*. If I can look around me and see as I do"—(she waves her fan round, and points to the illustrations scintillating round the room)—"and see as I do now—a Poski, whose name is ever connected with Polish history—an Ettore, who has exchanged a tonsure and a rack for our own free country—a Hammerstein, and a Quartz, a Miss Rudge, our Transatlantic sister (who, I trust, will not mention *this* modest salon in her forthcoming work on Europe), and Miss Pinnifer, whose genius I acknowledge, though I deplore her opinions; if I can gather together travellers, poets, and painters, princes and distinguished soldiers from the East, and clergymen remarkable for their eloquence, *my* humble aim is attained, and Maria Newcome is not altogether useless in her generation. Will you take a little refreshment? Allow *your sister* to go down to the dining-room supported by your *gallant* arm." She looked round to the admiring congregation, whereof Honeyman, as it were, acted as clerk, and flirting her fan, and flinging up her little head, Consummate Virtue walked down on the arm of the Colonel.

The refreshment was rather meagre. The foreign artists generally dashed down-stairs, and absorbed all the ices, creams, etc. To those coming late there were chicken-bones, table-cloths puddled with melted ice, glasses hazy with sherry, and broken bits of bread. The Colonel said he never supped; and he and Honeyman walked away together, the former to bed, the latter, I am sorry to say, to his club; for he was a dainty feeder, and loved lobster, and talk late at night, and a comfortable little glass of something wherewith to conclude the day.

He agreed to come to breakfast with the Colonel, who named eight or nine for the meal. Nine Mr. Honeyman agreed to with a sigh. The incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's chapel seldom rose before eleven. For, to tell the

truth, no French abbé of Louis XV. was more lazy, and luxurious, and effeminate, than our polite bachelor preacher.

## The Disgraceful Conduct of Mr. Stiggins[1]

*Charles Dickens* (1812–1870)

The monthly meetings of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association were held in a large room, pleasantly and airily situated at the top of a safe and commodious ladder. The president was the straight-walking Mr. Anthony Humm, a converted fireman, now a schoolmaster, and occasionally an itinerant preacher; and the secretary was Mr. Jonas Mudge, chandler's shopkeeper, an enthusiastic and disinterested vessel, who sold tea to the members. Previous to the commencement of business the ladies sat upon forms, and drank tea, till such time as they considered it expedient to leave off; and a large wooden money-box was conspicuously placed upon the green-baize cloth of the business-table, behind which the secretary stood and acknowledged, with a gracious smile, every addition to the rich vein of copper which lay concealed within.

On this particular occasion the women drank tea to a most alarming extent; greatly to the horror of Mr. Weller, Senior, who, utterly regardless of all Sam's admonitory nudgings, stared about him in every direction with the most undisguised astonishment.

"Sammy," whispered Mr. Weller, "if some o' these here people don't want tappin' to-morrow mornin', I ain't your father, and that's wot it is. Why, this here old lady next to me is a-drowndin' herself in tea."

[1] From *The Pickwick Club.*

"Be quiet, can't you?" murmured Sam.

"Sam," whispered Mr. Weller, a moment afterward, in a tone of deep agitation, "mark my vords, my boy. If that 'ere secretary fellow keeps on for only five minutes more he'll blow hisself up with toast and water."

"Well, let him, if he likes," replied Sam; "it ain't no bis'ness o' yourn."

"If this here lasts much longer, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, in the same low voice, "I shall feel it my duty, as a human bein', to rise and address the cheer. There's a young 'ooman on the next form but two as has drunk nine breakfast-cups and a half; and she's a-swellin' wisibly before my wery eyes."

There is little doubt that Mr. Weller would have carried his benevolent intention into immediate execution if a great noise, occasioned by putting up the cups and saucers, had not very fortunately announced that the tea-drinking was over. The crockery having been removed, the table with the green-baize cover was carried out into the centre of the room, and the business of the evening was commenced by a little emphatic man, with a bald head and drab shorts, who suddenly rushed up the ladder, at the imminent peril of snapping the two little legs encased in the drab shorts, and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I move our excellent brother Mr. Anthony Humm into the chair."

The ladies waved a choice collection of pocket-handkerchiefs at this proposition; and the impetuous little man literally moved Mr. Humm into the chair, by taking him by the shoulders and thrusting him into a mahogany frame which had once represented that article of furniture. The waving of handkerchiefs was renewed; and Mr. Humm, who was a sleek, white-faced man, in a perpetual perspiration, bowed meekly, to the great admiration of the females,

and formally took his seat. Silence was then proclaimed by the little man in the drab shorts, and Mr. Humm rose and said that, with the permission of his Brick Lane Branch brothers and sisters, then and there present, the secretary would read the report of the Brick Lane Branch committee; a proposition which was again received with a demonstration of pocket-handkerchiefs.

The secretary having sneezed in a very impressive manner, and the cough which always seizes an assembly, when anything particular is going to be done, having been duly performed, the following document was read:

"REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE BRICK LANE BRANCH OF THE UNITED GRAND JUNCTION EBENEZER TEMPERANCE ASSOCIATION.

"Your committee have pursued their grateful labors during the past month, and have the unspeakable pleasure of reporting the following additional cases of converts to Temperance.

"H. Walker, tailor, wife, and two children. When in better circumstances, owns to having been in the constant habit of drinking ale and beer; says he is not certain whether he did not twice a week, for twenty years, taste 'dog's nose,' which your committee find, upon inquiry, to be compounded of warm porter, moist sugar, gin, and nutmeg" (a groan, and "So it is!" from an elderly female). "Is now out of work, and penniless; thinks it must be the porter" (cheers) "or the loss of the use of his right hand; is not certain which, but thinks it very likely that, if he had drank nothing but water all his life, his fellow-workman would never have stuck a rusty needle in him, and thereby occasioned his accident" (tremendous cheering). "Has nothing but cold water to drink, and never feels thirsty"( great applause).

"Betsy Martin, widow, one child, and one eye. Goes out charing and washing, by the day; never had more than one eye, but knows her mother drank bottled stout, and shouldn't wonder if that caused it" (immense cheering). "Thinks it not impossible that if she had always abstained from spirits she might have had two eyes by this time" (tremendous applause). "Used, at every place she went to, to have eighteen-pence a day, a pint of porter, and a glass of spirits; but since she became a member of the Brick Lane Branch has always demanded three-and-sixpence instead" (the announcement of this most interesting fact was received with deafening enthusiasm).

"Henry Beller was for many years toastmaster at various corporation dinners, during which time he drank a great deal of foreign wine; may sometimes have carried a bottle or two home with him; is not quite certain of that, but is sure if he did that he drank the contents. Feels very low and melancholy, is very feverish, and has a constant thirst upon him; thinks it must be the wine he used to drink" (cheers). "Is out of employ now; and never touches a drop of foreign wine by any chance" (tremendous plaudits).

"Thomas Burton is purveyor of cat's meat to the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and several members of the Common Council" (the announcement of this gentleman's name was received with breathless interest). "Has a wooden leg; finds a wooden leg expensive going over the stones; used to wear second-hand wooden legs, and drink a glass of hot gin-and-water regularly every night—sometimes two" (deep sighs). "Found the second-hand wooden legs split and rot very quickly; is firmly persuaded that their constitution was undermined by the gin-and-water" (prolonged cheering). "Buys new wooden legs now, and drinks nothing but water and weak tea. The new legs

last twice as long as the others used to do, and he attributes this solely to his temperate habits" (triumphant cheers).

Anthony Humm now moved that the assembly do regale itself with a song. With a view to their rational and moral enjoyment, Brother Mordlin had adapted the beautiful words of "Who Hasn't Heard of a Jolly Young Waterman?" to the tune of the Old Hundredth, which he would request them to join him in singing (great applause). He might take that opportunity of expressing his firm persuasion that the late Mr. Dibdin, seeing the errors of his former life, had written that song to show the advantages of abstinence. It was a temperance song (whirlwinds of cheers). The neatness of the young man's attire, the dexterity of his feathering, the enviable state of mind which enabled him, in the beautiful words of the poet, to

"Row along, thinking of nothing at all,"

all combined to prove that he must have been a water-drinker (cheers). Oh, what a state of virtuous jollity! (rapturous cheering). And what was the young man's reward? Let all young men present mark this:

"The maidens all flock'd to his boat so readily."

(Loud cheers, in which the ladies joined.) What a bright example! The sisterhood, the maidens, flocking round the young waterman, and urging him along the stream of duty and of temperance. But was it the maidens of humble life only who soothed, consoled, and supported him? No!

"He was always first oars with the fine city ladies."

(Immense cheering.) The soft sex to a man—he begged pardon, to a female—rallied round the young waterman,

and turned with disgust from the drinker of spirits (cheers). The Brick Lane Branch brothers were watermen (cheers and laughter). That room was their boat; that audience were the maidens; and he (Mr. Anthony Humm), however unworthily, was "first oars" (unbounded applause).

"Wot does he mean by the soft sex, Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller, in a whisper.

"The womin," said Sam, in the same tone.

"He ain't far out there, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller; "they *must* be a soft sex –a wery soft sex, indeed—if they let themselves be gammoned by such fellers as him."

Any further observations from the indignant old gentleman were cut short by the announcement of the song, which Mr. Anthony Humm gave out, two lines at a time, for the information of such of his hearers as were unacquainted with the legend. While it was being sung, the little man with the drab shorts disappeared; he returned immediately on its conclusion, and whispered Mr. Anthony Humm, with a face of the deepest importance.

"My friends," said Mr. Humm, holding up his hand in a deprecatory manner, to bespeak the silence of such of the stout old ladies as were yet a line or two behind; "my friends, a delegate from the Dorking branch of our society, Brother Stiggins, attends below."

Out came the pocket-handkerchiefs again, in greater force than ever; for Mr. Stiggins was excessively popular among the female constituency of Brick Lane.

"He may approach, I think," said Mr. Humm, looking round him with a fat smile. "Brother Tadger, let him come forth and greet us."

The little man in the drab shorts, who answered to the name of Brother Tadger, bustled down the ladder with great speed, and was immediately afterward heard tumbling up with the Reverend Mr. Stiggins.

"He's a-comin', Sammy," whispered Mr. Weller, purple in the countenance with suppressed laughter.

"Don't say nothin' to me," replied Sam, "for I can't bear it. He's close to the door. I hear him a-knockin' his head ag'in the lath and plaster now."

As Sam Weller spoke, the little door flew open, and Brother Tadger appeared, closely followed by the Reverend Mr. Stiggins, who no sooner entered than there was a great clapping of hands, and stamping of feet, and flourishing of handkerchiefs; to all of which manifestations of delight Brother Stiggins returned no other acknowledgment than staring with a wild eye, and a fixed smile, at the extreme top of the wick of the candle on the table; swaying his body to and fro, meanwhile, in a very unsteady and uncertain manner.

"Are you unwell, Brother Stiggins?" whispered Mr. Anthony Humm.

"I am all right, sir," replied Mr. Stiggins, in a tone in which ferocity was blended with an extreme thickness of utterance; "I am all right, sir."

"Oh, very well," rejoined Mr. Anthony Humm, retreating a few paces.

"I believe no man here has ventured to say that I am *not* all right, sir?" said Mr. Stiggins.

"Oh, certainly not," said Mr. Humm.

"I should advise him not to, sir; I should advise him not," said Mr. Stiggins.

By this time the audience were perfectly silent, and waited with some anxiety for the resumption of business.

"Will you address the meeting, Brother?" said Mr. Humm, with a smile of invitation.

"No, sir," rejoined Mr. Stiggins; "no, sir. I will not, sir."

The meeting looked at each other with raised eyelids; and a murmur of astonishment ran through the room.

"It's my opinion, sir," said Mr. Stiggins, unbuttoning his coat, and speaking very loudly; "it's my opinion, sir, that this meeting is drunk, sir. Brother Tadger, sir!" said Mr. Stiggins, suddenly increasing in ferocity, and turning sharp round on the little man in the drab shorts, "*you* are drunk, sir!" With this, Mr. Stiggins, entertaining a praiseworthy desire to promote the sobriety of the meeting, and to exclude therefrom all improper characters, hit Brother Tadger on the summit of the nose with such unerring aim that the drab shorts disappeared like a flash of lightning. Brother Tadger had been knocked, head first, down the ladder.

Upon this, the women set up a loud and dismal screaming; and, rushing in small parties before their favorite brothers, flung their arms around them to preserve them from danger — an instance of affection which had nearly proved fatal to Humm, who, being extremely popular, was all but suffocated by the crowd of female devotees that hung about his neck, and heaped caresses upon him. The greater part of the lights were quickly put out, and nothing but noise and confusion resounded on all sides.

"Now, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, taking off his great-coat with much deliberation, "just you step out, and fetch in a watchman."

"And wot are you agoin' to do the while?" inquired Sam.

"Never you mind me, Sammy," replied the old gentleman; "I shall ockipy myself in havin' a small settlement with that 'ere Stiggins." Before Sam could interfere to prevent it, his heroic parent had penetrated into a remote corner of the room and attacked the Reverend Mr. Stiggins with manual dexterity.

"Come off!" said Sam.

"Come on!" cried Mr. Weller; and without further invitation he gave the Reverend Mr. Stiggins a preliminary tap on the head, and began dancing round him in a buoyant and cork-like manner, which in a gentleman at his time of life was a perfect marvel to behold.

Finding all remonstrance unavailing, Sam pulled his hat firmly on, threw his father's coat over his arm, and taking the old man round the waist, forcibly dragged him down the ladder, and into the street, never releasing his hold, or permitting him to stop, until they reached the corner. As they gained it, they could hear the shouts of the populace, who were witnessing the removal of the Reverend Mr. Stiggins to strong lodgings for the night, and could hear the noise occasioned by the dispersion in various directions of the members of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association.

## An Amateur Hamlet[1]

*Charles Dickens* (1812–1870)

On our arrival in Denmark we found the king and queen of that country elevated in two arm-chairs on a kitchen-table, holding a court. The whole of the Danish nobility were in attendance; consisting of a noble boy in the wash-leather boots of a gigantic ancestor, a venerable peer with a dirty face, who seemed to have risen from the people late in life, and the Danish chivalry with a comb in its hair and a pair of white silk legs, and presenting on the whole a feminine appearance. My gifted townsman stood gloomily apart, with folded arms, and I could have

[1] From *Great Expectations.*

wished that his curls and forehead had been more probable.

Several curious little circumstances transpired as the action proceeded. The late king of the country not only appeared to have been troubled with a cough at the time of his decease, but to have taken it with him to the tomb, and to have brought it back. The royal phantom also carried a ghostly manuscript round its truncheon, to which it had the appearance of occasionally referring, and that, too, with an air of anxiety and a tendency to lose the place of reference which were suggestive of a state of mortality. It was this, I conceive, which led to the Shade's being advised by the gallery to "turn over!"—a recommendation which it took extremely ill. It was likewise to be noted of this majestic spirit that whereas it always appeared with an air of having been out a long time and walked an immense distance, it perceptibly came from a closely contiguous wall. This occasioned its terrors to be received derisively. The Queen of Denmark, a very buxom lady, though no doubt historically brazen, was considered by the public to have too much brass about her; her chin being attached to her diadem by a broad band of that metal (as if she had a gorgeous toothache), her waist being encircled by another, and each of her arms by another, so that she was openly mentioned as "the kettledrum." The noble boy in the ancestral boots was inconsistent, representing himself, as it were, in one breath, as an able seaman, a strolling actor, a grave-digger, a clergyman, and a person of the utmost importance at a court fencing-match, on the authority whose practised eye and nice discrimination the finest strokes were judged. This gradually led to a want of toleration for him, and even—on his being detected in holy orders, and declining to perform the funeral service—to the general indignation taking

the form of nuts. Lastly, Ophelia was a prey to such slow musical madness that when, in course of time, she had taken off her white muslin scarf, folded it up, and buried it, a sulky man who had been long cooling his impatient nose against the iron bar in the front row of the gallery growled, "Now the baby's put to bed, let's have supper!" Which, to say the least of it, was out of keeping.

Upon my unfortunate townsman all these incidents accumulated with playful effect. Whenever that undecided prince had to ask a question or state a doubt, the public helped him out with it. As for example: on the question whether 'twas nobler in the mind to suffer, some roared yes, and some no, and some inclining to both opinions said "toss up for it"; and quite a debating society arose. When he asked what should such fellows as he do crawling between the earth and heaven, he was encouraged with loud cries of "Hear, hear!" When he appeared with his stocking disordered (its disorder expressed, according to usage, by one very neat fold in the top, which I suppose to be always got up with a flat iron), a conversation took place in the gallery respecting the paleness of his leg, and whether it was occasioned by the turn the ghost had given him. On his taking the recorders—very like a little black flute that had just been played in the orchestra and handed out at the door — he was called upon unanimously for "Rule Britannia." When he recommended the player not to saw the air thus, the sulky man said, "And don't *you* do it, neither; you're a deal worse than *him!*" And I grieve to add that peals of laughter greeted Mr. Wopsle on every one of these occasions.

But his greatest trials were in the churchyard, which had the appearance of a primeval forest, with a kind of small ecclesiastical wash-house on one side, and a turn-

pike gate on the other. Mr. Wopsle, in a comprehensive black cloak, being descried entering at the turnpike, the grave-digger was admonished in a friendly way, "Look out! Here's the undertaker a-coming to see how you're getting on with your work!" I believe it is well known in a constitutional country that Mr. Wopsle could not possibly have returned the skull, after moralizing over it, without dusting his fingers on a white napkin taken from his breast; but even that innocent and indispensable action did not pass without the comment "Wai-ter!" The arrival of the body for interment (in an empty black box with the lid tumbling open) was the signal for a general joy which was much enhanced by the discovery, among the bearers, of an individual obnoxious to identification. The joy attended Mr. Wopsle through his struggle with Laertes on the brink of the orchestra and the grave, and slackened no more until he had tumbled the king off the kitchen-table, and had died by inches from the ankles upward.

We had made some pale efforts in the beginning to applaud Mr. Wopsle; but they were too hopeless to be persisted in. Therefore we had sat, feeling keenly for him, but laughing, nevertheless, from ear to ear. I laughed in spite of myself all the time, the whole thing was so droll; and yet I had a latent impression that there was something decidedly fine in Mr. Wopsle's elocution—not for old associations' sake, I am afraid, but because it was very slow, very dreary, very up-hill and down-hill, and very unlike any way in which any man in any natural circumstances of life or death ever expressed himself about anything. When the tragedy was over, and he had been called for and hooted, I said to Herbert, "Let us go at once or perhaps we shall meet him."

## Fanny Squeers's Letter[1]

*Charles Dickens* (1812–1870)

[Nicholas Nickleby, assistant-master at Dotheboys Hall, has forcibly prevented Mr. Squeers, the headmaster, from administering brutal punishment to Smike, the school-drudge. Miss Fanny Squeers writes to inform Nickleby's uncle of the event.]

"Dotheboys Hall, Thursday morning.

"Sir: My pa requests me to write to you, the doctors considering it doubtful whether he will ever recuvver the use of his legs which prevents his holding a pen.

"We are in a state of mind beyond everything, and my pa is one mask of brooses both blue and green likewise two forms are steepled in his Goar. We were kimpelled to have him carried down into the kitchen where he now lays. You will judge from this that he has been brought very low.

"When your nevew that you recommended for a teacher had done this to my pa and jumped upon his body with his feet and also langwedge which I will not pollewt my pen with describing, he assaulted my ma, with dreadful violence, dashed her to earth, and drove her back comb several inches into her head. A very little more and it must have entered her skull. We have a medical certifiket that if it had, the tortershell would have affected the brain.

"Me and my brother were then the victims of his feury since which we have suffered very much which leads us to the arrowing belief that we have received some injury in our insides, especially as no marks of violence are visible externally. I am screaming out loud all the time I write

[1] From *Nicholas Nickleby.*

and so is my brother which takes off my attention rather and I hope will excuse mistakes.

"The monster having sasiated his thirst for blood ran away, taking with him a boy of desperate caracter that he had excited to rebellyon, and a garnet ring belonging to my ma, and not having been apprehended by the constables is supposed to have been took up by some stage-coach. My pa begs that if he comes to you the ring may be returned, and that you will let the thief and assassin go, as if we prosecuted him he would only be transported, and if he is let go he is sure to be hung before long which will save us trouble and be much more satisfactory. Hoping to hear from you when convenient

"I remain

"Yours and cetrer

"Fanny Squeers.

"P.S.—I pity his ignorance and despise him."

## The Curates at Tea[1]

*Charlotte Brontë* (1816–1855)

[The three curates are at tea at the rector's, Mr. Helstone's.]

It was a fact to be noted, that at whatever house in Briarfield, Whinbury, or Nunnely, one curate dropped in to a meal—dinner or tea, as the case might be—another presently followed; often two more. Not that they gave each other the rendezvous, but they were usually all on the run at the same time; and when Donne, for instance, sought Malone at his lodgings and found him not, he inquired whither he had posted, and having learned of the

[1] From *Shirley*.

landlady his destination, hastened with all speed after him; the same causes operated in the same way with Sweeting. Thus it chanced on that afternoon that Caroline's ears were three times tortured with the ringing of the bell, and the advent of undesired guests: for Donne followed Malone, and Sweeting followed Donne; and more wine was ordered up from the cellar into the dining-room (for though old Helstone chid the inferior priesthood when he found them "carousing," as he called it, in their own tents, yet at his hierarchical table he ever liked to treat them to a glass of his best), and through the closed doors Caroline heard their boyish laughter, and the vacant cackle of their voices. Her fear was lest they should stay to tea; for she had no pleasure in making tea for that particular trio.

Eliza, the rector's cook, fortunately knew her business as provider; she had been put out of humour a little at first, when the invaders came so unexpectedly in such strength; but it appeared that she regained her cheerfulness with action, for in due time the tea was spread forth in handsome style; and neither ham, tarts, nor marmalade were wanting among its accompaniments.

The curates, summoned to this bounteous repast, entered joyous; but at once, on seeing the ladies, of whose presence they had not been forewarned, they came to a stand in the doorway. Malone headed the party; he stopped short and fell back, almost capsizing Donne, who was behind him. Donne, staggering three paces in retreat, sent little Sweeting into the arms of old Helstone, who brought up the rear. There was some expostulation, some tittering; Malone was desired to mind what he was about, and urged to push forward; which at last he did, though colouring to the top of his peaked forehead a bluish purple. Helstone, advancing, set the shy curates aside, welcomed

all his fair guests, shook hands and passed a jest with each, and seated himself snugly between the lovely Harriet and the dashing Hannah; Miss Mary he requested to move to the seat opposite to him, that he might see her, if he couldn't be near her. Perfectly easy and gallant, in his way, were his manners always to young ladies; and most popular was he among them; yet, at heart, he neither respected nor liked the sex, and such of them as circumstances had brought into intimate relation with him had ever feared rather than loved him.

The curates were left to shift for themselves. Sweeting, who was the least embarrassed of the three, took refuge beside Mrs. Sykes, who, he knew, was almost as fond of him as if he had been her son. Donne, after making his general bow with a grace all his own, and saying in a high pragmatical voice, "How d'ye do, Miss Helstone?" dropped into a seat at Caroline's elbow, to her unmitigated annoyance, for she had a peculiar antipathy to Donne, on account of his stultified and unmovable self-conceit, and his incurable narrowness of mind. Malone, grinning most unmeaningly, inducted himself into the corresponding seat on the other side; she was thus blessed in a pair of supporters, neither of whom, she knew, would be of any mortal use, whether for keeping up the conversation, handing cups, circulating the muffins, or even lifting the plate from the slop-basin. Little Sweeting, small and boyish as he was, would have been worth twenty of them.

Malone, though a ceaseless talker when there were only men present, was usually tongue-tied in the presence of ladies; three phrases, however, he had ready cut and dried, which he never failed to produce:

1stly.—"Have you had a walk to-day, Miss Helstone?"

2ndly.—"Have you seen your cousin, Moore, lately?"

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3rdly.—"Does your class at the Sunday-school keep up its number?"

These three questions being put and responded to, between Caroline and Malone reigned silence.

With Donne it was otherwise; he was troublesome, exasperating. He had a stock of small-talk on hand, at once the most trite and perverse that can well be imagined: abuse of the people of Briarfield; of the natives of Yorkshire generally; complaints of the want of high society; of the backward state of civilization in these districts; murmurings against the disrespectful conduct of the lower orders in the north toward their betters; silly ridicule of the manner of living in these parts—the want of style, the absence of elegance, as if he, Donne, had been accustomed to very great doings indeed, an insinuation which his somewhat underbred manner and aspect failed to bear out. These strictures he seemed to think must raise him in the estimation of Miss Helstone, or of any other lady who heard him; whereas with her, at least, they brought him to a level below contempt; though sometimes, indeed, they incensed her; for a Yorkshire girl herself, she hated to hear Yorkshire abused by such a pitiful prater; and when brought up to a certain pitch, she would turn and say something of which neither the matter nor the manner recommended her to Mr. Donne's good will. She would tell him it was no proof of refinement to be ever scolding others for vulgarity; and no sign of a good pastor to be eternally censuring his flock. She would ask him what he had entered the church for, since he complained there were only cottages to visit, and poor people to preach to? Whether he had been ordained to the ministry merely to wear soft clothing and sit in kings' houses? These questions were considered by all the curates as, to the last degree, audacious and impious.

Tea was a long time in progress; all the guests gabbled, as their hostess had expected they would. Mr. Helstone, being in excellent spirits—when, indeed, was he ever otherwise in society, attractive female society?—it being only with the one lady of his own family that he maintained a grim taciturnity—kept up a brilliant flow of easy prattle with his right-hand and left-hand neighbours, and even with his *vis-à-vis*, Miss Mary; though as Mary was the most sensible, the least coquettish, of the three, to her the elderly widower was the least attentive. At heart, he could not abide sense in women; he liked to see them as silly, as light-headed, as vain, as open to ridicule as possible; because they were then in reality what he held them to be, and wished them to be—inferior; toys to play with, to amuse a vacant hour and to be thrown away.

Hannah was his favourite. Harriet, though beautiful, egotistical, and self-satisfied, was not quite weak enough for him; she had some genuine self-respect amid much false pride, and if she did not talk like an oracle, neither would she babble like one crazy; she would not permit herself to be treated quite as a doll, a child, a plaything; she expected to be bent to like a queen.

Hannah, on the contrary, demanded no respect; only flattery; if her admirers only *told* her that she was an angel, she would let them *treat* her like an idiot. So very credulous and frivolous was she; so very silly did she become when besieged with attention, flattered and admired to the proper degree, that there were moments when Helstone actually felt tempted to commit matrimony a second time, and to try the experiment of taking her for his second helpmeet; but, fortunately, the salutary recollection of the ennuis of his first marriage, the impression still left on him of the weight of the millstone he had once worn round his neck, the fixity of his feelings respecting the insufferable

evils of conjugal existence, operated as a check to his tenderness, suppressed the sigh heaving his old iron lungs, and restrained him from whispering to Hannah proposals it would have been high fun and great satisfaction to her to hear.

It is probable she would have married him if he had asked her; her parents would have quite approved the match; to them his fifty-five years, his bend-leather heart, could have presented no obstacles; and, as he was a rector, held an excellent living, occupied a good house, and was supposed even to have private property (though in that the world was mistaken; every penny of the 5,000*l.* inherited by him from his father had been devoted to the building and endowing of a new church at his native village in Lancashire—for he could show a lordly munificence when he pleased, and if the end was to his liking, never hesitated about making a grand sacrifice to attain it), her parents, I say, would have delivered Hannah over to his loving kindness and his tender mercies without one scruple; and the second Mrs. Helstone, inversing the natural order of insect existence, would have fluttered through the honeymoon a bright, admired butterfly, and crawled the rest of her days a sordid, trampled worm.

Little Mr. Sweeting, seated between Mrs. Sykes and Miss Mary, both of whom were very kind to him, and having a dish of tarts before him, and marmalade and crumpet upon his plate, looked and felt more content than any monarch. He was fond of all the Misses Sykes; they were all fond of him; he thought them magnificent girls, quite proper to mate with one of his inches. If he had a cause of regret at this blissful moment, it was that Miss Dora happened to be absent, Dora being the one whom he secretly hoped one day to call Mrs. David Sweeting, with whom he dreamed of taking stately walks, leading her like an empress through

the village of Nunnely; and an empress she would have been, if size could make an empress. She was vast, ponderous; seen from behind, she had the air of a very stout lady of forty; but withal she possessed a good face, and no unkindly character.

The meal at last drew to a close; it would have been over long ago if Mr. Donne had not persisted in sitting with his cup half full of cold tea before him long after the rest had finished and after he himself had discussed such allowance of viands as he felt competent to swallow—long, indeed, after signs of impatience had been manifested all round the board; till chairs were pushed back; till the talk flagged; till silence fell. Vainly did Caroline inquire repeatedly if he would have another cup; if he would take a little hot tea, as that must be cold, etc.; he would neither drink it nor leave it. He seemed to think that this isolated position of his gave him somehow a certain importance; that it was dignified and stately to be the last; that it was grand to keep all the others waiting. So long did he linger that the very urn died; it ceased to hiss. At length, however, the old rector himself, who had hitherto been too pleasantly engaged with Hannah to care for the delay, got impatient.

"For whom are we waiting?" he asked.

"For me, I believe," returned Donne, complacently, appearing to think it much to his credit that a party should thus be kept dependent on his movements.

"Tut!" cried Helstone; then standing up, "let us return thanks," said he; which he did forthwith, and all quitted the table. Donne, nothing abashed, still sat ten minutes quite alone, whereupon Mr. Helstone rang the bell for the things to be removed; the curate at length saw himself forced to empty his cup, and to relinquish the rôle which, he thought, had given him such a felicitous

distinction, drawn upon him such flattering general notice.

And now, in the natural course of events (Caroline, knowing how it would be, had opened the piano, and produced music-books in readiness), music was asked for. This was Mr. Sweeting's chance for showing off; he was eager to commence; he undertook, therefore, the arduous task of persuading the young ladies to favour the company with an air—a song. *Con amore*, he went through the whole business of begging, praying, resisting excuses, explaining away difficulties, and at last succeeded in persuading Miss Harriet to allow herself to be led to the instrument. Then out came the pieces of his flute (he always carried them in his pocket, as unfailingly as he carried his handkerchief). They were screwed and arranged; Malone and Donne meantime herding together, and sneering at him, which the little man, glancing over his shoulder, saw, but did not heed at all; he was persuaded their sarcasm all arose from envy; they could not accompany the ladies as he could; he was about to enjoy a triumph over them.

The triumph began. Malone, much chagrined at hearing him pipe up in most superior style, determined to earn distinction, too, if possible, and all at once assuming the character of a swain (which character he had endeavoured to enact once or twice before, but in which he had not hitherto met with the success he doubtless opined his merits deserved), approached a sofa on which Miss Helstone was seated, and, depositing his great Irish frame near her, tried his hand (or rather tongue) at a fine speech or two, accompanied by grins the most extraordinary and incomprehensible. In the course of his efforts to render himself agreeable he contrived to possess himself of the two long sofa cushions and a square one, with which, after rolling

them about for some time with strange gestures, he managed to erect a sort of barrier between himself and the object of his attentions. Caroline, quite willing that they should be sundered, soon devised an excuse for stepping over to the opposite side of the room, and taking up a position beside Mrs. Sykes, of which good lady she entreated some instruction in a new stitch in ornamental knitting, a favour readily granted; and thus Peter Augustus was thrown out.

Very sullenly did his countenance lower when he saw himself abandoned—left entirely to his own resources, on a large sofa, with the charge of three small cushions on his hands.

## Mrs. Poyser Has Her Say Out[1]

*George Eliot* (1819–1880)

[Squire Donnithorne has come to propose an unfair and peculiarly unacceptable exchange of land to Mrs. Poyser, who is his tenant. Mrs. Poyser, whose shrewd sense and homely wit make her a dangerous antagonist, on this occasion rises to the height of her powers.]

"Good-day, Mrs. Poyser," said the old squire, peering at her with his short-sighted eyes—a mode of looking at her which, as Mrs. Poyser observed, "allays aggravated her; it was as if you was a insect, and he was going to dab his finger-nail on you."

However, she said, "Your servant, sir," and courtesied with an air of perfect deference as she advanced toward him; she was not the woman to misbehave toward her betters, and fly in the face of the catechism, without severe provocation.

[1] From *Adam Bede.*

"Is your husband at home, Mrs. Poyser?"

"Yes, sir; he's only i' the rick-yard. I'll send for him in a minute, if you'll please to get down and step in."

"Thank you; I will do so. I want to consult him about a little matter; but you are quite as much concerned in it, if not more. I must have your opinion too."

"Hetty, run and tell your uncle to come in," said Mrs. Poyser, as they entered the house, and the old gentleman bowed low in answer to Hetty's courtesy; while Totty, conscious of a pinafore stained with gooseberry jam, stood hiding her face against the clock, and peeping round furtively.

"What a fine old kitchen this is!" said Mr. Donnithorne, looking round admiringly. He always spoke in the same deliberate, well-chiselled, polite way, whether his words were sugary or venomous. "And you keep it so exquisitely clean, Mrs. Poyser. I like these premises, do you know, beyond any on the estate."

"Well, sir, since you're fond of 'em, I should be glad if you'd let a bit o' repairs be done to 'em, for the boarding's i' that state as we're likely to be eaten up wi' rats and mice; and the cellar, you may stan' up to your knees i' the water in't, if you like to go down; but perhaps you'd rather believe my words. Won't you please to sit down, sir?"

"Not yet; I must see your dairy. I have not seen it for years, and I hear on all sides about your fine cheese and butter," said the squire, looking politely unconscious that there could be any question on which he and Mrs. Poyser might happen to disagree. "I think I see the door open, there; you must not be surprised if I cast a covetous eye on your cream and butter. I don't expect that Mrs. Satchell's cream and butter will bear comparison with yours."

"I can't say, sir, I'm sure. It's seldom I see other folks'

butter, though there's some on it as no one need to see—the smell's enough."

"Ah! now this I like," said Mr. Donnithorne, looking round at the damp temple of cleanliness, but keeping near the door. "I'm sure I should like my breakfast better if I knew the butter and cream came from this dairy. Thank you, that really is a pleasant sight. Unfortunately, my slight tendency to rheumatism makes me afraid of damp; I'll sit down in your comfortable kitchen. Ah! Poyser, how do you do? In the midst of business, I see, as usual. I've been looking at your wife's beautiful dairy—the best manager in the parish, is she not?"

Mr. Poyser had just entered in shirt-sleeves and open waistcoat, with a face a shade redder than usual, from the exertion of "pitching." As he stood, red, rotund, and radiant before the small, wiry, cool old gentleman, he looked like a prize apple by the side of a withered crab.

"Will you please to take this chair, sir?" he said, lifting his father's arm-chair forward a little; "you'll find it easy."

"No, thank you, I never sit in easy-chairs," said the old gentleman, seating himself on a small chair near the door. "Do you know, Mrs. Poyser—sit down, pray, both of you—I've been far from contented, for some time, with Mrs. Satchell's dairy management. I think she has not a good method as you have."

"Indeed, sir, I can't speak to that," said Mrs. Poyser, in a hard voice, rolling and unrolling her knitting, and looking icily out of the window, as she continued to stand opposite the squire. Poyser might sit down if he liked, she thought; *she* wasn't going to sit down, as if she'd give in to any such smooth-tongued palaver. Mr. Poyser, who looked and felt the reverse of icy, did sit down in his three-cornered chair.

"And now, Poyser, as Satchell is laid up, I am intending

to let the Chase Farm to a respectable tenant. I'm tired of having a farm on my own hands — nothing is made the best of, in such cases, as you know. A satisfactory bailiff is hard to find; and I think you and I, Poyser, and your excellent wife here, can enter into a little arrangement in consequence which will be to our mutual advantage."

"Oh," said Mr. Poyser, with a good-natured blankness of imagination as to the nature of the arrangement.

"If I'm called upon to speak, sir," said Mrs. Poyser, after glancing at her husband with pity at his softness, "you know better than me; but I don't see what the Chase Farm is t' us—we've cumber enough wi' our own farm. Not but what I'm glad to hear o' anybody respectable coming into the parish; there's some as ha' been brought in as hasn't been looked on i' that character."

"You're likely to find Mr. Thurle an excellent neighbor, I assure you; such a one as you will feel glad to have accommodated by the little plan I'm going to mention; especially as I hope you will find it as much to your own advantage as his."

"Indeed, sir, if it's anything t' our advantage, it 'll be the first offer o' the sort I've heared on. It's them that take advantage that get advantage i' this world *I* think; folks have to wait long enough afore it's brought to 'em."

"The fact is, Poyser," said the squire, ignoring Mrs. Poyser's theory of worldly prosperity, "there is too much dairy-land, and too little plow-land, on the Chase Farm to suit Thurle's purpose—indeed, he will only take the farm on condition of some change in it; his wife, it appears, is not a clever dairy-woman, like yours. Now, the plan I'm thinking of is to effect a little exchange. If you were to have the Hollow Pastures, you might increase your dairy, which must be so profitable under your wife's management; and I should request you, Mrs. Poyser, to supply my house

with milk, cream, and butter at the market prices. On the other hand, Poyser, you might let Thurle have the Lower and Upper Ridges, which really, with our wet seasons, would be a good riddance for you. There is much less risk in dairy-land than corn-land."

Mr. Poyser was leaning forward, with his elbows on his knees, his head on one side, and his mouth screwed up—apparently absorbed in making the tips of his fingers meet so as to represent with perfect accuracy the ribs of a ship. He was much too acute a man not to see through the whole business, and to foresee perfectly what would be his wife's view of the subject; but he disliked giving unpleasant answers; unless it was on a point of farming practice, he would rather give up than have a quarrel, any day; and after all, it mattered more to his wife than to him. So, after a few moments' silence, he looked up at her and said, mildly, "What dost say?"

Mrs. Poyser had had her eyes fixed on her husband with cold severity during his silence, but now she turned away her head with a toss, looked icily at the opposite roof of the cow-shed, and, spearing her knitting together with the loose pin, held it firmly between her clasped hands.

"Say? Why, I say you may do as you like about giving up any o' your corn-land, afore your lease is up, which it won't be for a year come next Michaelmas Lady-day, but I'll not consent to take more dairy work into my hands, either for love or money; and there's naythor love nor money here, as I can see, on'y other folks's love o' theirselves, and the money as is to go into other folks's pockets. I know there's them as is born t' own the land, and them as is born to sweat on 't"—here Mrs. Poyser paused to gasp a little—"and I know it's christened folks's duty to submit to their betters as fur as flesh and blood 'ull bear it; but I'll not make a martyr o' myself, and wear myself to

skin and bone, and worret myself as if I was a churn wi' butter a-coming in't, for no landlord in England, not if he was King George himself."

"No, no, my dear Mrs. Poyser, certainly not," said the squire, still confident in his own powers of persuasion; "you must not overwork yourself: but don't you think your work will rather be lessened than increased in this way? There is so much milk required at the Abbey that you will have little increase of cheese and butter making from the addition to your dairy; and I believe selling the milk is the most profitable way of disposing of dairy produce, is it not?"

"Ay, that's true," said Mr. Poyser, unable to repress an opinion on a question of farming profits, and forgetting that it was not in this case a purely abstract question.

"I daresay," said Mrs. Poyser, bitterly, turning her head half-way toward her husband, and looking at the vacant arm-chair—"I daresay it's true for men as sit i' th' chimney-corner and make believe as everything's cut wi' ins an' outs to fit int' everything else. If you could make a pudding wi' thinking o' the batter, it 'ud be easy getting dinner. How do I know whether the milk 'ull be wanted constant? What's to make me sure as the house won't be put o' board-wage afore we're many months older, and then I may have to lie awake o' nights wi' twenty gallons o' milk on my mind—and Dingall 'ull take no more butter, let alone paying for it; and we must fat pigs till we're obliged to beg the butcher on our knees to buy 'em, and lose half of 'em wi' the measles. And there's the fetching and carrying, as 'ud be welly half a day's work for a man an' hoss—*that's* to be took out o' the profits, I reckon? But there's folks 'ud hold a sieve under the pump and expect to carry away the water."

"That difficulty—about the fetching and carrying—you

will not have, Mrs. Poyser," said the squire, who thought that this entrance into particulars indicated a distant inclination to compromise on Mrs. Poyser's part. "Bethell will do that regularly with the cart and pony."

"Oh, sir, begging your pardon, I've never been used t' having gentlefolks' servants coming about my back places, a-making love to both the gells at once, and keeping 'em with their hands on their hips listening to all manner o' gossip when they should be down on their knees a-scouring. If we're to go to ruin, it shanna be wi' having our back kitchen turned into a public."

"Well, Poyser," said the squire, shifting his tactics, and looking as if he thought Mrs. Poyser had suddenly withdrawn from the proceedings and left the room, "you can turn the Hollows into feeding-land. I can easily make another arrangement about supplying my house. And I shall not forget your readiness to accommodate your landlord as well as a neighbor. I know you will be glad to have your lease renewed for three years, when the present one expires; otherwise, I daresay Thurle, who is a man of some capital, would be glad to take both the farms, as they could be worked so well together. But I don't want to part with an old tenant like you."

To be thrust out of the discussion in this way would have been enough to complete Mrs. Poyser's exasperation, even without the final threat. Her husband, really alarmed at the possibility of their leaving the old place where he had been bred and born—for he believed the old squire had small spite enough for anything — was beginning a mild remonstrance explanatory of the inconvenience he should find in having to buy and sell more stock, with:

"Well, sir, I think as it's rether hard" . . . when Mrs. Poyser burst in with the desperate determination to have

her say out this once, though it were to rain notices to quit, and the only shelter were the workhouse.

"Then, sir, if I may speak—as, for all I'm a woman, and there's folks as thinks a woman's fool enough to stan' by an' look on while the men sign her soul away, I've a right to speak, for I make one quarter o' the rent, and save th' other quarter—I say, if Mr. Thurle's so ready to take farms under you, it's a pity but what he should take this, and see if he likes to live in a house wi' all the plagues o' Egypt in 't—wi' the cellar full o' water, and frogs and toads hoppin' up the steps by dozens—and the floors rotten, and the rats and mice gnawing every bit o' cheese, and runnin' over our heads as we lie i' bed till we expect 'em to eat us up alive—as it's a mercy they hanna eat the children long ago. I should like to see if there's another tenant besides Poyser as 'ud put up wi' never having a bit o' repairs done till a place tumbles down—and not then, on'y wi' begging and praying, and having to pay half—and being strung up wi' the rent as it's much if he gets enough out o' the land to pay, for all he's put his own money into the ground beforehand. See if you'll get a stranger to lead such a life here as that; a maggot must be born i' the rotten cheese to like it, I reckon. You may run away from my words, sir," continued Mrs. Poyser, following the old squire beyond the door—for after the first moments of stunned surprise he had got up, and waving his hand toward her with a smile, had walked out toward his pony. But it was impossible for him to get away immediately, for John was walking the pony up and down the yard, and was some distance from the causeway when his master beckoned.

"You may run away from my words, sir, and you may go spinnin' underhand ways o' doing us a mischief, for you've got old Harry to your friend, though nobody else is, but I tell you for once as we're not dumb creaturs to be

abused and made money on by them as ha' got the lash i' their hands, for want o' knowing how t' undo the tackle. An' if I'm th' only one as speaks my mind, there's plenty o' the same way o' thinking i' this parish and the next to 't, for your name's no better than a brimstone match in everybody's nose – if it isna two-three old folks as you think o' saving your soul by giving 'em a bit o' flannel and a drop o' porridge. An' you may be right i' thinking it 'll take but little to save your soul, for it 'll be the smallest savin' y' iver made, wi' all your scrapin'."

There are occasions on which two servant-girls and a wagoner may be a formidable audience, and as the squire rode away on his black pony, even the gift of short-sightedness did not prevent him from being aware that Molly and Nancy and Tim were grinning not far from him. Perhaps he suspected that sour old John was grinning behind him – which was also the fact. Meanwhile the bulldog, the black-and-tan terrier, Alick's sheep-dog, and the gander hissing at a safe distance from the pony's heels, carried out the idea of Mrs. Poyser's solo in an impressive quartet.

Mrs. Poyser, however, had no sooner seen the pony move off than she turned round, gave the two hilarious damsels a look which drove them into the back kitchen, and, unspearing her knitting, began to knit again with her usual rapidity, as she re-entered the house.

"Thee'st done it now," said Mr. Poyser, a little alarmed and uneasy, but not without some triumphant amusement at his wife's outbreak.

"Yis, I know I've done it," said Mrs. Poyser; "but I've had my say out, and I shall be th' easier for 't all my life. There's no pleasure i' living, if you're to be corked up for iver, and only dribble your mind out by the sly, like a leaky barrel. I sha'n't repent saying what I think, if I live to be as old as th' old squire; and there's little likelihoods—

for it seems as if them as aren't wanted here are th' only folks as aren't wanted i' th' other world."

"But thee wotna like moving from th' old place, this Michaelmas twelvemonth," said Mr. Poyser, "and going into a strange parish, where thee know'st nobody? It 'll be hard upon us both, and upo' father too."

"Eh! it's no use worreting; there's plenty o' things may happen between this and Michaelmas twelvemonth. The captain may be master afore then, for what we know," said Mrs. Poyser, inclined to take an unusually hopeful view of an embarrassment which had been brought about by her own merit, and not by other people's fault.

"I *am* none for worreting," said Mr. Poyser, rising from his three-cornered chair and walking slowly toward the door; "but I should be loath to leave th' old place, and the parish where I was bred and born, and father afore me. We should leave our roots behind us, I doubt, and never thrive again."

## Mrs. Berry on Matrimony[1]

*George Meredith* (1828–1909)

[Richard Feverel has made a runaway marriage with Lucy, a farmer's niece, and has come up to London to make his peace with his father, Sir Austin Feverel. Sir Austin has had a bitter experience of matrimony, Lady Feverel having deserted him and run off with a vagabond poet while Richard was yet a baby; this early misfortune has made him especially careful of his son's upbringing, and the more offended at his recent behaviour. Richard has been in London, parted from his wife, waiting for the coming of his father three months, when he meets his old nurse, Mrs. Berry. The marriage had taken

[1] From *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel.*

place from her house, and the wedding-ring, having been accidentally lost, hers had been borrowed for the occasion and subsequently retained by Lucy. Mrs. Berry has also found matrimony an adventure, for, years since, the faithless Mr. Berry deserted her after a nine months' trial.]

It came to pass that Mrs. Berry, having certain business that led her through Kensington Gardens, spied a figure that she had once dandled in long clothes, and helped make a man of, if ever woman did. He was walking under the trees beside a lady, talking to her not indifferently. The gentleman was her bridegroom and her babe. "I know his back," said Mrs. Berry, as if she had branded a mark on it in infancy. But the lady was not her bride. Mrs. Berry diverged from the path, and got before them on the left flank; she started, retreated, and came round upon the right. There was that in the lady's face which Mrs. Berry did not like. Her innermost question was, why he was not walking with his own wife? She stopped in front of them. They broke and passed about her. The lady made a laughing remark to him, whereat he turned to look, and Mrs. Berry bobbed. She had to bob a second time, and then he remembered the worthy creature, and hailed her Penelope, shaking her hand so that he put her in countenance again. Mrs. Berry was extremely agitated. He dismissed her, promising to call upon her in the evening. She heard the lady slip out something from a side of her lip, and they both laughed as she toddled off to a sheltering tree to wipe a corner of each eye. "I don't like the looks of that woman," she said, and repeated it resolutely.

"Why doesn't he walk arm-in-arm with her?" was her next inquiry. "Where's his wife?" succeeded it. After many interrogations of the sort, she arrived at naming the lady a bold-faced thing; adding subsequently, brazen,

The lady had apparently shown Mrs. Berry that she wished to get rid of her, and had checked the outpouring of her emotions on the breast of her babe. "I know a lady when I see one," said Mrs. Berry. "I haven't lived with 'em for nothing; and if she's a lady bred and born, I wasn't married in the church alive."

Then, if not a lady, what was she? Mrs. Berry desired to know. "She's imitation lady, I'm sure she is!" Berry vowed. "I say she don't look proper."

Establishing the lady to be a spurious article, however, what was one to think of a married man in company with such? "Oh no! it ain't that!" Mrs. Berry returned immediately on the charitable tack. "Belike it's some one of his acquaintance 've married her for her looks, and he've just met her. . . . Why it 'd be as bad as my Berry!" the relinquished spouse of Berry ejaculated, in horror at the idea of a second man being so monstrous in wickedness. "Just coupled, too!" Mrs. Berry groaned on the suspicious side of the debate. "And such a sweet young thing for his wife! But no, I'll never believe it. Not if he tell me so himself! And men don't do that," she whimpered.

Women are swift at coming to conclusions in these matters; soft women exceedingly swift; and soft women who have been betrayed are rapid beyond measure. Mrs. Berry had not cogitated long ere she pronounced distinctly and without a shadow of dubiosity: "My opinion is—married or not married, and wheresomever he pick her up—she's nothin' more nor less than a Bella Donna!" as which poisonous plant she forthwith registered the lady in the botanical note-book of her brain. It would have astonished Mrs. Mount to have heard her person so accurately hit off at a glance.

In the evening Richard made good his promise, accompanied by Ripton. Mrs. Berry opened the door to them.

She could not wait to get him into the parlour. "You're my own blessed babe; and I'm as good as your mother—though I didn't suck ye, bein' a maid!" she cried, falling into his arms, while Richard did his best to support the unexpected burden. Then reproaching him tenderly for his guile—at mention of which Ripton chuckled, deeming it his own most honourable portion of the plot—Mrs. Berry led them into the parlour, and revealed to Richard who she was, and how she had tossed him, and hugged him, and kissed him all over, when he was only that big—showing him her stumpy fat arm. "I kissed ye from head to tail, I did," said Mrs. Berry, "and you needn't be ashamed of it. It's be hoped you'll never have nothin' worse come t'ye, my dear."

Richard assured her he was not a bit ashamed, but warned her that she must not do it now, Mrs. Berry admitting it was out of the question now, and now that he had a wife, moreover. The young men laughed, and Ripton, laughing over-loudly, drew on himself Mrs. Berry's attention: "But that Mr. Thompson there—however he can look me in the face after his inn'cence! helping blindfold an old woman!—though I ain't sorry for what I did—that I'm free for to say, and it's over, and blessed be all! Amen! So now where is she and how is she, Mr. Richard, my dear—it's only cuttin' off the "s" and you are as you was. Why didn't ye bring her with ye to see her old Berry?"

Richard hurriedly explained that Lucy was still in the Isle of Wight.

"Oh! and you've left her for a day or two?" said Mrs. Berry.

"Good God! I wish it had been a day or two," cried Richard.

"Ah! and how long have it been?" asked Mrs. Berry, her heart beginning to beat at his manner of speaking.

"Don't talk about it," said Richard.

"Oh! you never been dudgeonin' already? Oh! you haven't been peckin' at one another yet?" Mrs. Berry exclaimed.

Ripton interposed to tell her such fears were unfounded.

"Then how long ha' you been divided?"

In a guilty voice Ripton stammered "since September."

"September!" breathed Mrs. Berry, counting on her fingers, "September, October, Nov—two months and more —nigh three! A young married husband away from the wife of his bosom nigh three months! Oh my! Oh my! what do that mean?"

"My father sent for me—I'm waiting to see him," said Richard. A few more words helped Mrs. Berry to comprehend the condition of affairs. Then Mrs. Berry spread her lap, flattened out her hands, fixed her eyes, and spoke.

"My dear young gentleman! I'd like to call ye my darlin' babe! I'm going to speak as a mother to ye, whether ye likes it or no; and what old Berry says, you won't mind, for she's had ye when there was no conventionals about ye, and she has the feelin's of a mother to you, though humble her state. If there's one that know matrimony it's me, my dear, though Berry did give me no more but nine months of it; and I've known the worst of matrimony, which, if you wants to be woful wise, there it is for ye. For what have been my gain? That man gave me nothin' but his name; and Bessy Andrews was as good as Bessy Berry, though both is 'Bs,' and says he, you was 'A,' and now you's 'B,' so you're my A B, he says; write yourself down that, he says, the bad man, with his jokes! Berry went to service." Mrs. Berry's softness came upon her. "So I tell ye, Berry went to service. He left the wife of his bosom forlorn and he went to service; because he were al'ays an ambitious man, and wasn't, so to speak,

happy out of his uniform—which was his livery—not even in my arms; and he let me know it. He got among them kitchen sluts, which was my mournin' ready made, and worse than a widow's cap to me, which is no shame to wear, and some say becoming. There's no man as ever lived known better than my Berry how to show his legs to advantage, and gals look at 'em. I don't wonder now that Berry was prostrated. His temptations was strong, and his flesh was weak. Then what I say is, that for a young married man—be he whomsoever he may be—to be separated from the wife of his bosom—a young, sweet thing, and he an innocent young gentleman!—so to sunder, in their state, and be kep' from each other, I say it's as bad as bad can be! For what is matrimony, my dears? We're told it's a holy ordnance. And why are ye so comfortable in matrimony? For that ye are not a-sinnin'! And they that severs ye they tempts ye to stray; and you learn too late the meanin' o' them blessin's of the priest—as it was ordained. Separate—what comes? Fust it's like the circulation of your blood a-stoppin'—all goes wrong. Then there's misunderstandings—ye've both lost the key. Then, behold ye, there's birds o' prey hoverin' over each on ye, and it's which'll be snapped up fust. Then—oh, dear! oh, dear! it be like the devil come into the world again." Mrs. Berry struck her hands and moaned. "A day I'll give ye; I'll go so far as a week; but there's the outside. Three months dwellin' apart! That's not matrimony, it's divorcin'! What can it be to her but widowhood? Widowhood with no cap to show for it! And what can it be to you, my dear? Think! you been a bachelor three months: and a bachelor man," Mrs. Berry shook her head most dolefully, "he ain't a widow woman. I don't go to compare you to Berry, my dear young gentleman. Some men's hearts is vagabonds born—they must go astray—it's their

natur' to. But all men are men, and I know the foundation of 'em, by reason of my woe."

Mrs. Berry paused. Richard was humourously respectful to the sermon. The truth in the good creature's address was not to be disputed, or despised, notwithstanding the inclination to laugh provoked by her quaint way of putting it. Ripton nodded encouragingly at every sentence, for he saw her drift, and wished to second it.

Seeking for an illustration of her meaning, Mrs Berry solemnly continued: "We all know what checked prespiration is." But neither of the young gentlemen could resist this. Out they burst in a roar of laughter.

"Laugh away!" said Mrs. Berry. "I don't mind ye. I say again, we all do know what checked prespiration is. It fly to the lungs, it gives ye mortal inflammation, and it carries ye off. Then I say checked matrimony is as bad. It fly to the heart, and it carries off the virtue that's in ye, and you might as well be dead! Them that is joined it's their salvation not to separate! It don't so much matter before it. That Mr. Thompson there—if he go astray, it ain't from the blessed fold. He hurt himself alone—not double, and belike treble, for who can say now what may be? There's time for it. I'm for holding back young people so that they knows their minds, howsomever they rattles about their hearts. I ain't a speeder of matrimony, and good's my reason! but where it's been done—where they're lawfully joined, and their bodies made one, I do say this, that to put division between 'em then, it's to make wanderin' comets of 'em—creatures without a objeck, and no soul can say what they's good for but to rush about!"

Mrs. Berry here took a heavy breath, as one who has said her utmost for the time being.

"My dear old girl," Richard went up to her and, applauding her on the shoulder, "you're a very wise old

woman. But you mustn't speak to me as if I wanted to stop here. I'm compelled to. I do it for her good chiefly."

"It's your father that's doin' it, my dear?"

"Well, I'm waiting his pleasure."

"A pretty pleasure! puttin' a snake in the nest of young turtle-doves! And why don't she come up to you?"

"Well, that you must ask her. The fact is, she's a little timid girl—she wants me to see him first, and when I've made all right, then she'll come."

"A little timid girl!" cried Mrs. Berry. "Oh, lor', how she must ha' deceived ye to make ye think that! Look at that ring," she held out her finger; "he's a stranger; he's not my lawful! You know what ye did to me, my dear? Could I get my own wedding-ring back from her? 'No!' says she, firm as a rock, 'he said, *with this ring* I thee wed.' I think I see her now, with her pretty eyes and lovesome locks—a darlin'! And that ring she'd keep too, come life, come death. And she must ha' been a rock for me to give into her in that. For what's the consequence? Here am I," Mrs. Berry smoothed down the back of her hand mournfully, "here am I in a strange ring, that's like a strange man holdin' of me, and me a-wearin of it just to seem decent, and feelin' all over no better than a b—a big—that nasty name I can't abide! I tell you, my dear, she ain't soft, no!—except to the man of her heart; and the best of women's too soft there—more's our sorrow!"

"Well, well!" said Richard, who thought he knew.

"I agree with you, Mrs. Berry," Ripton struck in. "Mrs. Richard would do anything in the world her husband asked her, I'm quite sure."

"Bless you for your good opinion, Mr. Thompson! Why, see her! she ain't frail on her feet; she looks ye straight in the eyes; she ain't one of your hang-down misses. Look how she behaved at the ceremony!"

"Ah!" sighed Ripton.

"And if you'd ha' seen her when she spoke to me about my ring! Depend upon it, my dear Mr. Richard, if she blinded you about the nerve she've got, it was somethin' she thought she ought to do for your sake, and I wish I'd been by to counsel her, poor blessed babe! And how much longer, now, can ye stay divided from that darlin'?"

Richard paced up and down.

"A father's will," urged Mrs. Berry, "that's a son's law; but he mustn't go agin' the laws of his nature to do it."

"Just be quiet at present—talk of other things, there's a good woman," said Richard.

Mrs. Berry meekly folded her arms.

"How strange, now, our meetin' like this! meetin' at all, too!" she remarked, contemplatively. "It's them advertisements! They brings people together from the ends of the earth, for good or for bad. I often say, there's more lucky accidents, or unlucky ones, since advertisements was the rule, than ever there was before. They make a number of romances, depend upon it! Do you walk much in the Gardens, my dear?"

"Now and then," said Richard.

"Very pleasant it is there with the fine folks and flowers and titled people," continued Mrs. Berry. "That was a handsome woman you was a-walkin' besides, this mornin'."

"Very," said Richard.

"She was a handsome woman! or I should say, is, for her day ain't past, and she know it. I thought at first—by her back—it might ha' been your aunt, Mrs. Forey; for she do step out well and hold up her shoulders; straight as a dart she be! But when I come to see her face—oh, dear me! says I, this ain't one of the family. They none of 'em got such bold faces—nor no *lady* as I know have. But she's a fine woman—that nobody can gainsay."

Mrs. Berry talked further of the fine woman. It was a liberty she took to speak in this disrespectful tone of her, and Mrs. Berry was quite aware that she was laying herself open to rebuke. She had her end in view. No rebuke was uttered, and during her talk she observed intercourse passing between the eyes of the young men.

"Look here, Penelope," Richard stopped her at last. "Will it make you comfortable if I tell you I'll obey the laws of my nature and go down at the end of the week?"

"I'll thank the Lord of heaven if you do!" she exclaimed.

"Very well, then—be happy—I will. Now listen! I want you to keep your rooms for me—those she had. I expect, in a day or two, to bring a lady here—"

"A lady?" faltered Mrs. Berry.

"Yes. A lady."

"May I make so bold as to ask what lady?"

"You may not. Not now. Of course you will know."

Mrs. Berry's short neck made the best imitation it could of an offended swan's action. She was very angry. She said she did not like so many ladies, which natural objection Richard met by saying that there was only one lady.

"And Mrs. Berry," he added, dropping his voice, "you will treat her as you did my dear girl, for she will require not only shelter but kindness. I would rather leave her with you than with any one. She has been very unfortunate."

His serious air and habitual tone of command fascinated the softness of Berry, and it was not until he had gone that she spoke out. "Unfort'nate! He's going to bring me an unfort'nate female! Oh! not from my babe can I bear that! Never will I have her here! I see it. It's that bold-faced woman he's got mixed up in, and she've been and made the young man think he'll go for to reform her. It's one o' their arts—that is; and he's too innocent a young

man to mean anythin' else. But I ain't a house of Magdalens—no! and sooner than have her here I'd have the roof fall over me, I would."

She sat down to eat her supper on the sublime resolve.

In love, Mrs. Berry's charity was all on the side of the law, and this is the case with many of her sisters.

Early next day Mrs. Berry bundled off to Richard's hotel to let him know her determination. She did not find him there. Returning homeward through the park, she beheld him on horseback riding by the side of the identical lady. The sight of this public exposure shocked her more than the secret walk under the trees. "You don't look near your reform yet," Mrs. Berry apostrophized her. "You don't look to me one that'd come the Fair Penitent till you've left off bein' fair—if then you do, which some of ye don't. Laugh away and show yer airs! Spite o' your hat and feather, and your ridin' habit, you're a Bella Donna." Setting her down again absolutely for such, whatever it might signify, Mrs. Berry had a virtuous glow.

In the evening she heard the noise of wheels stopping at the door. "Never!" she rose from her chair to exclaim. "He ain't rided her out in the mornin', and been and made a Magdalen of her afore dark."

A lady veiled was brought into the house by Richard. Mrs. Berry feebly tried to bar his progress in the passage. He pushed past her, and conducted the lady into the parlour without speaking. Mrs. Berry did not follow. She heard him murmur a few sentences within. Then he came out. All her crest stood up, as she whispered vigorously, "Mr. Richard! if that woman stay here, I go forth. My house ain't a penitentiary for unfort'nate females, sir—"

He frowned at her curiously; but as she was on the point of renewing her indignant protest, he clapped his hand across her mouth, and spoke words in her ear that had

awful import to her. She trembled, breathing low: "My God, forgive me! Lady Feverel is it? Your mother, Mr. Richard?" And her virtue was humbled.

## Two Illustrious Impostors[1]

*Mark Twain* (1835–1910)

[Huckleberry Finn is journeying down river on a raft accompanied by Jim, a runaway slave, when he makes the acquaintance of two illustrious impostors.]

One morning about daybreak I found a canoe and crossed over a chute to the main shore—it was only two hundred yards—and paddled about a mile up a crick amongst the cypress woods, to see if I couldn't get some berries. Just as I was passing a place where a kind of cow-path crossed the crick, here comes a couple of men tearing up the path as tight as they could foot it. I thought I was a goner, for whenever anybody was after anybody I judged it was *me*—or maybe Jim. I was about to dig out from there in a hurry, but they was pretty close to me then, and sung out and begged me to save their lives—said they hadn't been doing nothing and was being chased for it—said there was men and dogs a-coming. They wanted to jump right in, but I says:

"Don't you do it. I don't hear the dogs and horses yet; you've got time to crowd through the brush and get up the crick a little ways; then you take to the water and wade down to me and get in—that 'll throw the dogs off the scent."

They done it, and soon as they was aboard I lit out for

[1] From *Huckleberry Finn*. Copyright, 1884, by Samuel L. Clemens; copyright, 1896, by Harper & Brothers.

our tow-head, and in about five or ten minutes we heard the dogs and the men away off, shouting. We heard them come along toward the crick, but couldn't see them; they seemed to stop and fool around awhile; then, as we got further and further away all the time, we couldn't hardly hear them at all; by the time we had left a mile of woods behind us and struck the river, everything was quiet, and we paddled over to the tow-head and hid in the cotton-woods and was safe.

One of these fellows was about seventy or upward, and had a bald head and very gray whiskers. He had an old battered-up slouch hat on, and a greasy blue woollen shirt, and ragged old blue jeans britches stuffed into his boot-tops, and home-knit galluses—no, he only had one. He had an old long-tailed blue jeans coat with slick brass buttons flung over his arm, and both of them had big, fat, ratty-looking carpet-bags.

The other fellow was about thirty, and dressed about as ornery. After breakfast we all laid off and talked, and the first thing that come out was that these chaps didn't know one another.

"What got you into trouble?" says the baldhead to t'other chap.

"Well, I'd been selling an article to take the tartar off the teeth—and it does take it off, too, and generally the enamel along with it—but I stayed about one night longer than I ought to, and was just in the act of sliding out when I ran across you on the trail this side of town, and you told me they were coming, and begged me to help you to get off. So I told you I was expecting trouble myself, and would scatter out *with* you. That's the whole yarn—what's yourn?"

"Well, I'd ben a-runnin' a little temperance revival thar 'bout a week, and was the pet of the women-folks, big and

little, for I was makin' it mighty warm for the rummies, I *tell* you, and takin' as much as five or six dollars a night—ten cents a head, children and niggers free—and business a-growin' all the time, when somehow or another a little report got around last night that I had a way of puttin' in my time with a private jug on the sly. A nigger rousted me out this mornin', and told me the people was getherin' on the quiet with their dogs and horses, and they'd be along pretty soon and give me 'bout half an hour's start, and then run me down if they could; and if they got me they'd tar and feather me and ride me on a rail, sure. I didn't wait for no breakfast—I warn't hungry."

"Old man," said the young one, "I reckon we might double-team it together; what do you think?"

"I ain't undisposed. What's your line—mainly?"

"Jour printer by trade; do a little in patent medicines; theatre-actor—tragedy, you know; take a turn to mesmerism and phrenology when there's a chance; teach singing-geography school for a change; sling a lecture sometimes—oh, I do lots of things—most anything that comes handy, so it ain't work. What's your lay?"

"I've done considerable in the doctoring way in my time. Layin' on o' hands is my best holt—for cancer and paralysis, and sich things; and I k'n tell a fortune pretty good when I've got somebody along to find out the facts for me. Preachin's my line, too, and workin' camp-meetin's, and missionaryin' around."

Nobody never said anything for a while; then the young man hove a sigh and says:

"Alas!"

"What're you alassin' about?" says the baldhead.

"To think I should have lived to be leading such a life, and be degraded down into such company." And he begun to wipe the corner of his eye with a rag.

"Dern your skin, ain't the company good enough for you?" says the baldhead, pretty pert and uppish.

"Yes, it *is* good enough for me; it's as good as I deserve; for who fetched me so low when I was so high? *I* did myself. I don't blame *you* gentlemen—far from it: I don't blame anybody. I deserve it all. Let the cold world do its worst; one thing I know—there's a grave somewhere for me. The world may go on just as it's always done, and take everything from me—loved ones, property, everything; but it can't take that. Some day I'll lie down in it and forget it all, and my poor broken heart will be at rest." He went on a-wiping.

"Drot your pore broken heart," says the baldhead; "what are you heaving your pore broken heart at *us* f'r? *We* hain't done nothing."

"No, I know you haven't. I ain't blaming you gentlemen. It's right I should suffer—perfectly right—I don't make any moan."

"Brought you down from whar? Whar was you brought down from?"

"Ah, you would not believe me; the world never believes — let it pass — 'tis no matter. The secret of my birth—"

"The secret of your birth! Do you mean to say—"

"Gentlemen," says the young man, very solemn, "I will reveal it to you, for I feel I may have confidence in you. By rights I am a duke."

Jim's eyes bugged out when he heard that; and I reckon mine did, too. Then the baldhead says: "No! you can't mean it?"

"Yes. My great-grandfather, eldest son of the Duke of Bridgewater, fled to this country about the end of the last century, to breathe the pure air of freedom; married here, and died, leaving a son, his own father dying about the

same time. The second son of the late duke seized the titles and estates—the infant real duke was ignored. I am the lineal descendant of that infant—I am the rightful Duke of Bridgewater; and here am I, forlorn, torn from my high estate, hunted of men, despised by the cold world, ragged, worn, heartbroken, and degraded to the companionship of felons on a raft!"

Jim pitied him ever so much, and so did I. We tried to comfort him, but he said it warn't much use, he couldn't be much comforted; said if we was a mind to acknowledge him, that would do him more good than most anything else; so we said we would, if he would tell us how. He said we ought to bow when we spoke to him, and say "Your Grace," or "My Lord," or "Your Lordship"—and he wouldn't mind it if we called him plain "Bridgewater," which, he said, was a title anyway, and not a name; and one of us ought to wait on him at dinner, and do any little thing for him he wanted done.

Well, that was all easy, so we done it. All through dinner Jim stood around and waited on him, and says, "Will yo' Grace have some o' dis or some o' dat?" and so on, and a body could see it was mighty pleasing to him.

But the old man got pretty silent by-and-by—didn't have much to say, and didn't look pretty comfortable over all that petting that was going on around that duke. He seemed to have something on his mind. So, along in the afternoon, he says:

"Looky here, Bilgewater," he says, "I'm nation sorry for you, but you ain't the only person that's had troubles like that."

"No?"

"No, you ain't. You ain't the only person that's ben snaked down wrongfully out'n a high place."

"Alas!"

"No, you ain't the only person that's had a secret of his birth." And, by jings, *he* begins to cry.

"Hold! What do you mean?"

"Bilgewater, kin I trust you?" says the old man, still sort of sobbing.

"To the bitter death!" He took the old man by the hand and squeezed it, and says, "That secret of your being: speak!"

"Bilgewater, I am the late Dauphin!"

You bet you, Jim and me stared this time. Then the duke says:

"You are what?"

"Yes, my friend, it is too true—your eyes is lookin' at this very moment on the pore disappeared Dauphin, Looy the Seventeen, son of Looy the Sixteen and Marry Antonette."

"You! At your age! No! You mean you're the late Charlemagne; you must be six or seven hundred years old, at the very least."

"Trouble has done it, Bilgewater, trouble has done it; trouble has brung these gray hairs and this premature balditude. Yes, gentlemen, you see before you, in blue jeans and misery, the wanderin', exiled, trampled-on, and sufferin' rightful King of France."

Well, he cried and took on so that me and Jim didn't know hardly what to do, we was so sorry—and so glad and proud we'd got him with us, too. So we set in, like we done before with the duke, and tried to comfort *him*. But he said it warn't no use, nothing but to be dead and done with it all could do him any good; though he said it often made him feel easier and better for a while if people treated him according to his rights, and got down on one knee to speak to him, and always called him "Your Majesty," and waited on him first at meals, and didn't set down in his presence till he asked them. So Jim and me set to majestying him, and

doing this and that and t'other for him, and standing up till he told us we might set down. This done him heaps of good, and so he got cheerful and comfortable. But the duke kind of soured on him, and didn't look a bit satisfied with the way things was going; still, the king acted real friendly toward him, and said the duke's great-grandfather and all the other Dukes of Bilgewater was a good deal thought of by *his* father, and was allowed to come to the palace considerable; but the duke stayed huffy a good while, till by-and-by the king says:

"Like as not we got to be together a blamed long time on this h-yer raft, Bilgewater, and so what's the use o' your bein' sour? It 'll only make things oncomfortable. It ain't my fault I warn't born a duke, it ain't your fault you warn't born a king—so what's the use to worry? Make the best o' things the way you find 'em, says I—that's my motto. This ain't no bad thing that we've struck here—plenty grub and an easy life—come, give us your hand, duke, and le's all be friends."

The duke done it, and Jim and me was pretty glad to see it. It took away all the uncomfortableness and we felt mighty good over it, because it would 'a' been a miserable business to have any unfriendliness on the raft; for what you want, above all things, on a raft, is for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind toward the others.

## Joseph Poorgrass[1]

### *Thomas Hardy* (1840)

[Gabriel Oak, the new shepherd, enters the malt-house. All the company have drunk from the cider-cup, when it is discovered that Joseph Poorgrass has been left out.]

[1] From *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Published by Harper & Brothers.

"Why, Joseph Poorgrass, ye han't had a drop!" said Mr. Coggan to a self-conscious man in the background, thrusting the cup toward him.

"Such a modest man as he is!" said Jacob Smallbury. "Why, ye've hardly had strength of eye enough to look in our young mis'ess's face, so I hear, Joseph?"

All looked at Joseph Poorgrass with pitying reproach.

"No—I've hardly looked at her at all," simpered Joseph, reducing his body smaller while talking, apparently from a meek sense of undue prominence. "And when I seed her, 'twas nothing but blushes with me!"

"Poor feller!" said Mr. Clark.

"'Tis a curious nature for a man," said Jan Coggan.

"Yes," continued Joseph Poorgrass—his shyness, which was so painful as a defect, filling him with a mild complacency now that it was regarded as an interesting study. "'Twere blush, blush, blush with me every minute of the time, when she was speaking to me."

"I believe ye, Joseph Poorgrass, for we all know ye to be a very bashful man."

"'Tis a' awkward gift for a man, poor soul!" said the maltster. "And how long have ye suffered from it, Joseph?"

"Oh, ever since I was a boy. Yes—mother was concerned to her heart about it—yes. But 'twas all nought."

"Did ye ever go into the world to try and stop it, Joseph Poorgrass?"

"Oh ay, tried all sorts o' company. They took me to Greenhill Fair, and into a great large jerry-go-nimble show, where there were women-folk riding round—standing upon horses, with hardly anything on but their smocks; but it didn't cure me a morsel. And then I was put errand-man at the Woman's Skittle Alley at the back of the Tailor's Arms in Casterbridge. 'Twas a horrible evil situation, and

a very curious place for a good man. I had to stand and look ba'dy people in the face from morning till night; but 'twas no use—I was just as bad as ever after all. Blushes hev been in the family for generations. There, 'tis a happy providence that I be no worse, and I feel the blessing."

"True," said Jacob Smallbury, deepening his thoughts to a profounder view of the subject. "'Tis a thought to look at, that ye might have been worse; but even as you be, 'tis a very bad affliction for ye, Joseph. For ye see, shepherd, though 'tis very well for a woman, dang it all, 'tis awkward for a man like him, poor feller!" He appealed to the shepherd by a feeling glance.

"'Tis—'tis," said Gabriel, recovering from a meditation. "Yes, very awkward for the man."

"Ay, and he's very timid, too," observed Jan Coggan. "Once he had been working late at Yalbury Bottom, and had had a drap of drink, and lost his way as he was coming home along through Yalbury Wood, didn't ye, Master Poorgrass?"

"No, no, no; not that story!" expostulated the modest man, forcing a laugh to bury his concern.

"And so 'a lost himself quite," continued Mr. Coggan, with an impassive face, implying that a true narrative, like time and tide, must run its course and would respect no man. "And as he was coming along in the middle of the night, much afeared, and not able to find his way out of the trees nohow, 'a cried out, 'Man-a-lost! man-a-lost!' A owl in a tree happened to be crying 'Whoo-whoo-whoo!' as owls do, you know, shepherd" (Gabriel nodded), "and Joseph, all in a tremble, said, 'Joseph Poorgrass of Weatherbury, sir!'"

"No, no, now—that's too much!" said the timid man, becoming a man of brazen courage all of a sudden. "I didn't say *sir*. I'll take my oath I didn't say 'Joseph Poor-

grass o' Weatherbury, sir.' No, no; what's right is right, and I never said sir to the bird, knowing very well that no man of a gentleman's rank would be hollering there at that time o' night. 'Joseph Poorgrass of Weatherbury,' that's every word I said, and I shouldn't ha' said that if 't hadn't been for Keeper Day's metheglin. . . . There, 'twas a merciful thing it ended where it did."

The question of which was right being tacitly waived by the company, Jan went on meditatively:

"And he's the fearfulest man, bain't ye, Joseph? Ay, another time ye were lost by Lambing-Down Gate, weren't ye, Joseph?"

"I was," replied Poorgrass, as if there were some conditions too serious even for modesty to remember itself under, this being one.

"Yes; that were the middle of the night, too. The gate would not open, try how he would, and knowing there was the devil's hand in it, he kneeled down."

"Ay," said Joseph, acquiring confidence from the warmth of the fire, the cider, and a perception of the narrative capabilities of the experience alluded to. "My heart died within me, that time; but I kneeled down and said the Lord's Prayer, and then the Belief right through, and then the Ten Commandments, in earnest prayer. But no, the gate wouldn't open; and then I went on with Dearly Beloved Brethren, and thinks I, this makes four, and 'tis all I know out of book, and if this don't do it nothing will, and I'm a lost man. Well, when I got to Saying After Me, I rose from my knees and found the gate would open —yes, neighbours, the gate opened the same as ever."

A meditation on the obvious inference was indulged in by all, and during its continuance each directed his vision into the ashpit, which glowed like a desert in the tropics under a vertical sun, shaping their eyes long and liny,

partly because of the light, partly from the depth of the subject discussed.

## Preparing to Receive Company[1]

*J. M. Barrie* (1860)

Leeby was at the fire brandering a quarter of steak on the tongs, when the house was flung into consternation by Hendry's casual remark that he had seen Tibbie Mealmaker in town with her man.

"The Lord preserve 's!" cried Leeby.

Jess looked quickly at the clock.

"Half fower!" she said, excitedly.

"Then it canna be dune," said Leeby, falling despairingly into a chair, "for they may be here ony meenute."

"It's most michty," said Jess, turning on her husband, "'at ye should tak' a pleasure in bringin' this hoose to disgrace. Hoo did ye no tell 's suner?"

"I fair forgot," Hendry answered, "but what's a' yer steer?"

Jess looked at me (she often did this) in a way that meant, "What a man is this I'm tied to!"

"Steer!" she exclaimed. "Is't no time we was makkin' a steer? They'll be in for their tea ony meenute, an' the room no sae muckle as sweepit. Ay, an' me lookin' like a sweep; an' Tibbie Mealmaker 'at's sae partikler genteel seein' you sic a sicht as ye are!"

Jess shook Hendry out of his chair, while Leeby began to sweep with the one hand, and agitatedly to unbutton her wrapper with the other.

"She didna see me," said Hendry, sitting down forlornly on the table.

[1] From *A Window in Thrums.*

"Get aff that table!" cried Jess. "See haud o' the besom," she said to Leeby.

"For mercy's sake, mother," said Leeby, "gie yer face a dicht, an' put on a clean mutch."

"I'll open the door if they come afore you're ready," said Hendry, as Leeby pushed him against the dresser.

"Ye daur to speak aboot openin' the door, an' you sic a mess!" cried Jess, with pins in her mouth.

"Havers!" retorted Hendry. "A man canna be aye washin' at 'imsel'."

Seeing that Hendry was as much in the way as myself, I invited him up-stairs to the attic, whence we heard Jess and Leeby upbraiding each other shrilly. I was aware that the room was speckless; but for all that, Leeby was turning it upside down.

"She's aye ta'en like that," Hendry said to me, referring to his wife, "when she's expectin' company. Ay, it's a peety she canna tak' things cannier."

"Tibbie Mealmaker must be some one of importance?" I asked.

"Ou, she's naething by the ord'nar'; but ye see she was mairit to a Tilliedrum man no lang syne, an' they're said to hae a michty grand establishment. Ay, they've a wardrobe spleet new; an' what think ye Tibbie wears ilka day?"

I shook my head.

"It was Christy Miller 'at put it through the toon," Hendry continued. "Christy was in Tilliedrum last Teisday or Wednesday, an' Tibbie gae her a cup o' tea. Ay, weel, Tibbie telt Christy 'at she wears hose ilka day."

"Wears hose?"

"Ay. It's some michty grand kind o' stockin'. I never heard o't in this toon. Na, there's naebody in Thrums 'at wears hose."

"And who did Tibbie get?" I asked; for in Thrums they say, "Wha did she get?" and "Wha did he tak?"

"His name's Davit Curly. Ou, a crittur fu' o' maggots, an' nae great match, for he's juist the Tilliedrum bill-sticker."

At this moment Jess shouted from her chair (she was burnishing the society teapot as she spoke), "Mind, Hendry McQumpha, 'at upon nae condition are ye to mention the bill-stickin' afore Tibbie!"

"Tibbie," Hendry explained to me, "is a terrible vain tid, an' doesna think the bill-stickin' genteel. Ay, they say 'at if she meets Davit in the street wi' his paste-pot an' the brush in his hands she pretends no to ken 'im."

Every time Jess paused to think she cried up orders, such as:

"Dinna call her Tibbie, mind ye. Always address her as Mistress Curly."

"Shak' hands wi' baith o' them, an' say ye hope they're in the enjoyment o' guid health."

"Dinna put yer feet on the table."

"Mind, you'r no' to mention 'at ye kent they were in the toon."

"When onybody passes ye yer tea say, 'Thank ye.'"

"Dinna stir yer tea as if ye was churnin' butter, nor let on 'at the scones is no our ain bakin'."

"If Tibbie says onything aboot the china yer no' to say 'at we dinna use it ilka day."

"Dinna lean back in the big chair, for it's broken, an' Leeby's gi'en it a lick o' glue this meenute."

"When Leeby gies ye a kick aneath the table, that 'll be a sign to ye to say grace."

Hendry looked at me apologetically while these instructions came up.

"I winna dive my head wi' sic nonsense," he said; "it's

no' for a man body to be sae crammed fu' o' manners."

"Come awa doon," Jess shouted to him, "an' put on a clean dickey."

"I'll better do't to please her," said Hendry, "though for my ain part I dinna like the feel o' a dickey on week-days. Na, they mak 's think it's the Sabbath."

Ten minutes afterward I went down-stairs to see how the preparations were progressing. Fresh muslin curtains had been put up in the room. The grand foot-stool worked by Leeby was so placed that Tibbie could not help seeing it; and a fine cambric handkerchief, of which Jess was very proud, was hanging out of a drawer as if by accident. An antimacassar lying carelessly on the seat of a chair concealed a rent in the horsehair, and the china ornaments on the mantelpiece were so placed that they looked whole. Leeby's black merino was hanging near the window in a good light, and Jess's Sabbath bonnet, which was never worn, occupied a nail beside it. The tea-things stood on a tray in the kitchen bed, whence they could be quickly brought into the room, just as if they were always ready to be used daily. Leeby, as yet *en déshabillé*, was shaving her father at a tremendous rate, and Jess, looking as fresh as a daisy, was ready to receive the visitors. She was peering through the tiny window-blind looking for them.

"Be cautious, Leeby," Hendry was saying, when Jess shook her hand at him. "Wheesht," she whispered; "they're comin'."

Hendry was hustled into his Sabbath coat, and then came a tap at the door, a very genteel tap. Jess nodded to Leeby, who softly shoved Hendry into the room.

The tap was repeated, but Leeby pushed her father into a chair and thrust *Barrow's Sermons* open into his hand. Then she stole about the house, and swiftly buttoned her

wrapper, speaking to Jess by nods the while. There was a third knock, whereupon Jess said, in a loud, Englishy voice:

"Was that not a chap (knock) at the door?"

Hendry was about to reply, but she shook her fist at him. Next moment Leeby opened the door. I was upstairs, but I heard Jess say:

"Dear me, if it's not Mrs. Curly—and Mr. Curly! And hoo are ye? Come in, by. Weel, this is, indeed, a pleasant surprise!"

# III

# High-Water Mark

Crusoe Finds the Footprint.
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## Crusoe Finds the Footprint[1]

*Daniel Defoe* (1661–1731)

[Robinson Crusoe, having lived in undisturbed solitude on a desert island for fifteen years, one day discovers a man's footprint in the sand.]

It happened one day about noon, going toward my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand. I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition; I listened, I looked round me, I could hear nothing, nor see anything; I went up to a rising ground to look farther. I went up the shore and down the shore, but it was all one, I could see no other impression but that one. I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my fancy; but there was no room for that, for there was exactly the very print of a foot, toes, heel, and every part of a foot. How it came thither, I knew not, nor could in the least imagine. But after innumerable fluttering thoughts, like a man perfectly confused and out of myself, I came home to my fortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground I went on, but terrified to the last degree, looking behind me at every two or three steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man; nor is it possible to describe how many various shapes affrighted imagination

[1] From *Robinson Crusoe*. Published by Harper & Brothers.

represented things to me in, how many wild ideas were found every moment in my fancy, and what strange, unaccountable whimsies came into my thoughts by the way.

When I came to my castle, for so I think I called it ever after this, I fled into it like one pursued; whether I went over by the ladder as first contrived, or went in at the hole in the rock, which I called a door, I cannot remember; no, nor could I remember the next morning: for never frighted hare fled to cover, or fox to earth, with more terror of mind than I to this retreat.

I slept none that night; the farther I was from the occasion of my fright, the greater my apprehensions were, which is something contrary to the nature of such things, and especially to the usual practice of all creatures in fear; but I was so embarrassed with my own frightful ideas of the thing that I formed nothing but dismal imaginations to myself, even though I was now a great way off of it. Sometimes I fancied it must be the devil; and reason joined in with me upon this supposition. For how should any other thing in human shape come into the place? Where was the vessel that brought them? What marks were there of any other footsteps? And how was it possible a man should come there? But then to think that Satan should take human shape upon him in such a place where there could be no manner of occasion for it, but to leave the print of his foot behind him, and that even for no purpose too, for he could not be sure I should see it; this was an amusement the other way. I considered that the devil might have found out abundance of other ways to have terrified me than this of the single print of a foot. That as I lived quite on the other side of the island, he would never have been so simple to leave a mark in a place where it was ten thousand to one whether I should ever see it or not, and in the sand too, which the first surge of the sea upon

a high wind would have defaced entirely. All this seemed inconsistent with the thing itself, and with all the notions we usually entertain of the subtlety of the devil.

Abundance of such things as these assisted to argue me out of all apprehensions of its being the devil; and I presently concluded then that it must be some more dangerous creature—viz., that it must be some of the savages of the mainland over against me, who had wandered out to sea in their canoes; and either driven by the currents, or by contrary winds, had made the island; and had been on shore, but were gone away again to sea, being as loath, perhaps, to have stayed in this desolate island as I would have been to have had them.

While these reflections were rolling upon my mind, I was very thankful in my thoughts that I was so happy as not to be thereabouts at that time, or that they did not see my boat, by which they would have concluded that some inhabitants had been in the place, and perhaps have searched farther for me. Then terrible thoughts racked my imagination about their having found my boat, and that there were people here; and that, if so, I should certainly have them come again in greater numbers, and devour me; that if it should happen so that they should not find me, yet they would find my enclosure, destroy all my corn, carry away all my flock of tame goats, and I should perish at last for mere want.

Thus my fear banished all my religious hope; all that former confidence in God which was founded upon such wonderful experience as I had had of His goodness, now vanished, as if He that had fed me by miracle hitherto could not preserve by His power the provision which He had made for me by His goodness. I reproached myself with my easiness, that would not sow any more corn one year than would just serve me till the next season, as if

no accident could intervene to prevent my enjoying the crop that was upon the ground; and this I thought so just a reproof that I resolved for the future to have two or three years' corn beforehand, so that whatever might come I might not perish for want of bread.

How strange a chequer-work of Providence is the life of man! And by what secret differing springs are the affections hurried about as differing circumstances present! To-day we love what to-morrow we hate; to-day we seek what to-morrow we shun; to-day we desire what to-morrow we fear, nay, even tremble at the apprehensions of. This was exemplified in me at this time in the most lively manner imaginable; for I—whose only affliction was that I seemed banished from human society, that I was alone, circumscribed by the boundless ocean, cut off from mankind, and condemned to what I called silent life; that I was as one whom Heaven thought not worthy to be numbered among the living, or to appear among the rest of His creatures; that to have seen one of my own species would have seemed to me a raising me from death to life, and the greatest blessing that Heaven itself, next to the supreme blessing of salvation, could bestow—I say that I should now tremble at the very apprehensions of seeing a man, and was ready to sink into the ground at but the shadow or silent appearance of a man's having set his foot in the island.

Such is the uneven state of human life; and it afforded me a great many curious speculations afterward, when I had a little recovered my first surprise: I considered that this was the station of life the infinitely wise and good providence of God had determined for me, that as I could not foresee what the ends of divine wisdom might be in all this, so I was not to dispute His sovereignty, who, as I was His creature, had an undoubted right by creation to

govern and dispose of me absolutely as He thought fit; and who, as I was a creature who had offended Him, had likewise a judicial right to condemn me to what punishment He thought fit; and that it was my part to submit to bear His indignation, because I had sinned against Him.

I then reflected that God, who was not only righteous but omnipotent, as He had thought fit thus to punish and afflict me, so He was able to deliver me; that if He did not think fit to do it, it was my unquestioned duty to resign myself absolutely and entirely to His will; and on the other hand, it was my duty also to hope in Him, pray to Him, and quietly to attend the dictates and directions of His daily providence.

These thoughts took me up many hours, days; nay, I may say, weeks and months; and one particular effect of my cogitations on this occasion I cannot omit—viz., one morning early, lying in my bed, and filled with thought about my danger from the appearance of savages, I found it discomposed me very much, upon which those words of the Scripture came into my thoughts, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

Upon this, rising cheerfully out of my bed, my heart was not only comforted, but I was guided and encouraged to pray earnestly to God for deliverance. When I had done praying, I took up my Bible, and opening it to read, the first words that presented to me were, "Wait on the Lord, and be of good cheer, and He shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." It is impossible to express the comfort this gave me. In answer I thankfully laid down the Book, and was no more sad, at least, not on that occasion.

In the middle of the cogitations, apprehensions, and reflections, it came into my thought one day that all this

might be a mere chimera of my own; and that this foot might be the print of my own foot when I came on shore from my boat. This cheered me up a little too, and I began to persuade myself it was all a delusion; that it was nothing else but my own foot, and why might not I come that way from the boat, as well as I was going that way to the boat? Again, I considered also that I could by no means tell for certain where I had trod, and where I had not; and that if at last this was only the print of my own foot, I had played the part of those fools who strive to make stories of spectres and apparitions, and then are frighted at them more than anybody else.

Now I began to take courage, and to peep abroad again, for I had not stirred out of my castle for three days and nights; so that I began to starve for provisions; for I had little or nothing within doors but some barley cakes and water. Then I knew that my goats wanted to be milked too, which usually was my evening diversion; and the poor creatures were in great pain and inconvenience for want of it; and, indeed, it almost spoiled some of them, and almost dried up their milk. Heartening myself therefore with the belief that this was nothing but the print of one of my own feet, and so I might be truly said to start at my own shadow, I began to go abroad again, and went to my country house, to milk my flock; but to see with what fear I went forward, how often I looked behind me, how I was ready every now and then to lay down my basket and run for my life; it would have made any one have thought I was haunted with an evil conscience, or that I had been lately most terribly frighted, and so indeed I had.

However, as I went down thus two or three days, and having seen nothing, I began to be a little bolder, and to think there was really nothing in it but my own imagination,

But I could not persuade myself fully of this till I should go down to the shore again, and see this print of a foot and measure it by my own, and see if there was any similitude of fitness, that I might be assured it was my own foot. But when I came to the place, *first*, it appeared evidently to me, that when I laid up my boat I could not possibly be on shore anywhere thereabout. *Secondly*, when I came to measure the mark with my own foot, I found my foot was not so large by a great deal; both these things filled my head with new imaginations, and gave me the vapours again to the highest degree; so that I shook with cold, like one in an ague. And I went home again filled with the belief that some man or men had been on shore there; or in short, that the island was inhabited, and I might be surprised before I was aware; and what course to take for my security I knew not.

Oh, what ridiculous resolutions men take when possessed with fear! It deprives them of the use of those means which reason offers for their relief. The first thing I proposed to myself was to throw down my enclosures, and turn all my tame cattle wild into the woods, that the enemy might not find them; and then frequent the island in prospect of the same, or the like booty. Then to the simple thing of digging up my two corn-fields, that they might not find such a grain there, and still to be prompted to frequent the island; then to demolish my bower, and tent, that they might not see any vestiges of habitation and be prompted to look farther in order to find out the persons inhabiting.

These were the subjects of the first night's cogitation after I was come home again, while the apprehensions which had so overrun my mind were fresh upon me, and my head was full of vapours, as above. Thus fear of danger is ten thousand times more terrifying than danger itself

when apparent to the eyes: and we find the burden of anxiety greater by much than the evil which we are anxious about; and which was worse than all this, I had not that relief in this trouble from the resignation I used to practise, that I hoped to have. I looked, I thought, like Saul, who complained not only that the Philistines were upon him, but that God had forsaken him; for I did not now take due ways to compose my mind by crying to God in my distress, and resting upon His providence, as I had done before, for my defence and deliverance: which if I had done I had, at least, been more cheerfully supported under this new surprise, and perhaps carried through it with more resolution.

This confusion of my thoughts kept me waking all night; but in the morning I fell asleep, and having by the amusement of my mind been, as it were, tired, and my spirits exhausted, I slept very soundly and waked much better composed than I had ever been before; and now I began to think sedately; and upon the utmost debate with myself, I concluded that this island, which was so exceedingly pleasant, fruitful, and no farther from the mainland than as I had seen, was not so entirely abandoned as I might imagine; that although there were no stated inhabitants who lived on the spot, yet that there might sometimes come boats off from the shore, who, either with design, or perhaps never but when they were driven by cross winds, might come to this place.

That I had lived here fifteen years now, and had not met with the least shadow or figure of any people yet, and that if at any time they should be driven here, it was probable they went again as soon as ever they could, seeing they had never thought fit to fix there upon any occasion to this time.

That the most I could suggest any danger from was

from any such casual accidental landing of straggling people from the main, who, as it was likely if they were driven hither, were here against their wills; so they made no stay here, but went off again with all possible speed, seldom staying one night on shore, lest they should not have the help of the tides and daylight back again; and that, therefore, I had nothing to do but to consider of some safe retreat in case I should see any savages land upon the spot.

Now I began sorely to repent that I had dug my cave so large as to bring a door through again, which door, as I said, came out beyond where my fortification joined to the rock; upon maturely considering this, therefore, I resolved to draw me a second fortification, in the same manner of a semicircle, at a distance from my wall, just where I had planted a double row of trees, about twelve years before, of which I made mention; these trees having been planted so thick before, they wanted but a few piles to be driven between them that they should be thicker, and stronger, and my wall would be soon finished.

So that I had now a double wall, and my outer wall was thickened with pieces of timber, old cables, and everything I could think of to make it strong, having in it seven little holes about as big as I might put my arm out at. In the inside of this I thickened my wall to above ten foot thick with continual bringing earth out of my cave, and laying it at the foot of the wall and walking upon it; and through the seven holes I contrived to plant the muskets, of which I took notice that I got seven on shore out of the ship; these, I say, I planted like my cannon, and fitted them into frames that held them like a carriage, that so I could fire all the seven guns in two minutes' time. This wall I was many a weary month a-finishing, and yet never thought myself safe till it was done.

When this was done I stuck all the ground without my

wall, for a great way, every way, as full with stakes or sticks of the osier-like wood, which I found so apt to grow as they could well stand; insomuch that I believe I might set in near twenty thousand of them, leaving a pretty large space between them and my wall, that I might have room to see an enemy, and they might have no shelter from the young trees, if they attempted to approach my outer wall.

Thus in two years' time I had a thick grove, and in five or six years' time I had a wood before my dwelling, growing so monstrous thick and strong that it was indeed perfectly impassable; and no men of what kind soever would ever imagine that there was anything beyond it, much less a habitation. As for the way which I proposed to myself to go in and out, for I left no avenue, it was by setting two ladders; one to a part of the rock which was low, and then broke in, and left room to place another ladder upon that; so when the two ladders were taken down no man living could come down to me without mischieving himself; and if they had come down, they were still on the outside of my outer wall.

Thus I took all the measures human prudence could suggest for my own preservation; and it will be seen at length that they were not altogether without just reason; though I foresaw nothing at that time more than my mere fear suggested to me.

While this was doing I was not altogether careless of my other affairs; for I had a great concern upon me, for my little herd of goats; they were not only a present supply to me upon every occasion, and began to be sufficient to me, without the expense of powder and shot, but also without the fatigue of hunting after the wild ones; and I was loath to lose the advantage of them and to have all to nurse up over again.

To this purpose, after long consideration, I could think

of but two ways to preserve them; one was to find another convenient place to dig a cave under ground, and to drive them into it every night; and the other was to enclose two or three little bits of land, remote from one another and as much concealed as I could, where I might keep about half a dozen young goats in each place. So that if any disaster happened to the flock in general, I might be able to raise them again with little trouble and time. And this, though it would require a great deal of time and labour, I thought was the most rational design.

Accordingly I spent some time to find out the most retired parts of the island; and I pitched upon one which was as private indeed as my heart could wish for; it was a little damp piece of ground in the middle of the hollow and thick woods, where, as is observed, I almost lost myself once before endeavouring to come back that way from the eastern part of the island. Here I found a clear piece of land near three acres, so surrounded with woods that it was almost an enclosure by nature, at least it did not want near so much labour to make it so as the other pieces of ground I had worked so hard at.

I immediately went to work with this piece of ground, and in less than a month's time I had so fenced it round that my flock or herd, call it which you please, who were not so wild now as at first they might be supposed to be, were well enough secured in it. So, without any further delay, I removed ten young she-goats and two he-goats to this piece; and when they were there I continued to perfect the fence till I had made it as secure as the other, which, however, I did at more leisure, and it took me up more time by a great deal.

All this labour I was at the expense of purely from my apprehensions on the account of the print of a man's foot which I had seen.

## The Story of Le Fevre[1]

*Laurence Sterne* (1713–1768)

It was some time in the summer of that year in which *Dendermond* was taken by the allies,—which was about seven years before my father came into the country,—and about as many, after the time, that my uncle *Toby* and *Trim* had privately decamped from my father's house in town, in order to lay some of the finest sieges to some of the finest fortified cities in *Europe*——when my uncle *Toby* was one evening getting his supper, with *Trim* sitting behind him at a small sideboard,—I say, sitting—for in consideration of the corporal's lame knee (which sometimes gave him exquisite pain)—when my uncle *Toby* dined or supped alone, he would never suffer the corporal to stand; and the poor fellow's veneration for his master was such, that, with a proper artillery, my uncle *Toby* could have taken *Dendermond* itself, with less trouble than he was able to gain this point over him: for many a time when my uncle *Toby* supposed the corporal's leg was at rest, he would look back, and detect him standing behind him with the most dutiful respect: this bred more little squabbles betwixt them, than all other causes for five-and-twenty years together—But this is neither here nor there—why do I mention it?——Ask my pen,—it governs me,—I govern not it.

He was one evening sitting thus at his supper, when the landlord of a little inn in the village came into the parlour, with an empty phial in his hand, to beg a glass or two of sack; 'Tis for a poor gentleman,—I think, of the army, said the landlord, who has been taken ill at my house four days ago, and has never held up his head since, or had a

[1] From *Tristram Shandy.*

desire to taste any thing, till just now, that he has a fancy for a glass of sack and a thin toast,——*I think*, says he, taking his hand from his forehead, *it would comfort me.*———

——If I could neither beg, borrow, or buy such a thing —added the landlord.—I would almost steal it for the poor gentleman, he is so ill.——I hope in God he will still mend, continued he,—we are all of us concerned for him.

Thou art a good-natured soul, I will answer for thee, cried my uncle *Toby;* and thou shalt drink the poor gentleman's health in a glass of sack thyself,—and take a couple of bottles with my service, and tell him he is heartily welcome to them, and to a dozen more if they will do him good.

Though I am persuaded, said my uncle *Toby*, as the landlord shut the door, he is a very compassionate fellow—*Trim*,—yet I cannot help entertaining a high opinion of his guest too; there must be something more than common in him, that in so short a time should win so much upon the affections of his host;——And of his whole family, added the corporal, for they are all concerned for him.——Step after him, said my uncle *Toby*,—do, *Trim*,—and ask if he knows his name.

—— I have quite forgot it truly, said the landlord, coming back into the parlour with the corporal,—but I can ask his son again:——Has he a son with him then? said my uncle *Toby*.—A boy, replied the landlord, of about eleven or twelve years of age; –but the poor creature has tasted almost as little as his father; he does nothing but mourn and lament for him night and day:——He has not stirred from the bed-side these two days.

My uncle *Toby* laid down his knife and fork, and thrust his plate from before him, as the landlord gave him the account; and *Trim*, without being ordered, took away,

without saying one word, and in a few minutes after brought him his pipe and tobacco.

——Stay in the room a little, said my uncle *Toby*.

*Trim!*——said my uncle *Toby*, after he lighted his pipe, and smoak'd about a dozen whiffs.——*Trim* came in front of his master, and made his bow;—my uncle *Toby* smoak'd on, and said no more.——Corporal! said my uncle *Toby* ——the corporal made his bow.——My uncle *Toby* proceeded no farther, but finished his pipe.

*Trim!* said my uncle *Toby*, I have a project in my head, as it is a bad night, of wrapping myself up warm in my roquelaure, and paying a visit to this poor gentleman.—— Your honour's roquelaure, replied the corporal, has not once been had on, since the night before your honour received your wound, when we mounted guard in the trenches before the gate of St. *Nicholas;*——and besides, it is so cold and rainy a night, that what with the roquelaure, and what with the weather, 'twill be enough to give your honour your death, and bring on your honour's torment in your groin. I fear so, replied my uncle *Toby:* but I am not at rest in my mind, *Trim*, since the account the landlord has given me.——I wish I had not known so much of this affair,—added my uncle *Toby*,—or that I had known more of it:——How shall we manage it? Leave it, an't please your honour, to me, quoth the corporal;——I'll take my hat and stick and go to the house and reconnoitre, and act accordingly; and I will bring your honour a full account in an hour.——Thou shalt go, *Trim*, said my uncle *Toby*, and here's a shilling for thee to drink with his servant.—— I shall get it all out of him, said the corporal, shutting the door.

My uncle *Toby* filled his second pipe; and had it not been, that he now and then wandered from the point, with considering whether it was not full as well to have

the curtain of the tenaille a straight line, as a crooked one,—he might be said to have thought of nothing else but poor *Le Fevre* and his boy the whole time he smoak'd it.

It was not till my uncle *Toby* had knocked the ashes out of his third pipe, that corporal *Trim* returned from the inn, and gave him the following account.

I despaired, at first, said the corporal, of being able to bring back your honour any kind of intelligence concerning the poor sick lieutenant.—Is he in the army, then? said my uncle *Toby*——He is, said the corporal——And in what regiment? said my uncle *Toby*——I'll tell your honour, replied the corporal, every thing straight forwards, as I learnt it.—Then, *Trim*, I'll fill another pipe, said my uncle *Toby*, and not interrupt thee till thou has done; so sit down at thy ease, *Trim*, in the window-seat, and begin thy story again. The corporal made his old bow, which generally spoke as plain as a bow could speak it—*Your honour is good:*——And having done that, he sat down, as he was ordered,—and begun the story to my uncle *Toby* over again in pretty near the same words.

I despaired at first, said the corporal, of being able to bring back any intelligence to your honour, about the lieutenant and his son; for when I asked where his servant was, from whom I made myself sure of knowing every thing which was proper to be asked,—That's a right distinction, *Trim*, said my uncle *Toby*—I was answered, an' please your honour, that he had no servant with him;—— that he had come to the inn with hired horses, which, upon finding himself unable to proceed (to join, I suppose, the regiment), he had dismissed the morning after he came.— If I get better, my dear, said he, as he gave his purse to his son to pay the man,—we can hire horses from hence.—— But alas! the poor gentleman will never get from hence, said the landlady to me,—for I heard the death-watch all

night long;——and when he dies, the youth, his son, will certainly die with him, for he is broken-hearted already.

I was hearing this account, continued the corporal, when the youth came into the kitchen, to order the thin toast the landlord spoke of;——but I will do it for my father myself, said the youth.——Pray let me save you the trouble, young gentleman, said I, taking up a fork for the purpose, and offering him my chair to sit down by the fire, whilst I did it.——I believe, Sir, said he, very modestly, I can please him best myself.——I am sure, said I, his honour will not like the toast the worse for being toasted by an old soldier.——The youth took hold of my hand, and instantly burst into tears.——Poor youth! said my uncle *Toby*,—he has been bred up from an infant in the army, and the name of a soldier, *Trim*, sounded in his ears like the name of a friend;—I wish I had him here.

——I never, in the longest march, said the corporal, had so great a mind to my dinner, as I had to cry with him for company:—What could be the matter with me; an' please your honour? Nothing in the world, *Trim*, said my uncle *Toby*, blowing his nose,—but that thou art a good-natured fellow.

When I gave him the toast, continued the corporal, I thought it was proper to tell him I was captain *Shandy's* servant, and that your honour (though a stranger) was extremely concerned for his father;—and that if there was anything in your house or cellar——(And thou might'st have added my purse too, said my uncle *Toby*)——he was heartily welcome to it:——He made a very low bow (which was meant to your honour), but no answer—for his heart was full—so he went up stairs with the toast;—I warrant you, my dear, said I, as I opened the kitchen-door, your father will be well again.——Mr. *Yorick's* curate was smoaking a pipe by the kitchen fire,—but said not a word

good or bad to comfort the youth.——I thought it wrong; added the corporal——I think so too, said my uncle *Toby*.

When the lieutenant had taken his glass of sack and toast, he felt himself a little revived, and sent down into the kitchen, to let me know, that in about ten minutes he should be glad if I would step up stairs.——I believe, said the landlord, he is going to say his prayers.——for there was a book laid upon the chair by his bed-side, and as I shut the door, I saw his son take up a cushion.——

I thought, said the curate, that you gentlemen of the army, Mr. *Trim*, never said your prayers at all.——I heard the poor gentleman say his prayers last night, said the landlady, very devoutly, and with my own ears, or I could not have believed it.——Are you sure of it? replied the curate.——A soldier, an' please your reverence, said I, prays as often (of his own accord) as a parson;—— and when he is fighting for his king, and for his own life, and for his honour too, he has the most reason to pray to God of any one in the whole world.——'Twas well said of thee, *Trim*, said my uncle *Toby*.——But when a soldier, said I, an' please your reverence, has been standing for twelve hours together in the trenches, up to his knees in cold water,—or engaged, said I, for months together in long and dangerous marches;—harassed, perhaps, in his rear to-day;—harassing others to-morrow; detached here; —countermanded there;—resting this night out upon his arms;—beat up in his shirt the next;—benumbed in his joints;—perhaps without straw in his tent to kneel on;—— must say his prayers *how* and *when* he can.—I believe, said I,—for I was piqued, quoth the corporal, for the reputation of the army,—I believe, an' please your reverence, said I that when a soldier gets time to pray,—he prays as heartily as a parson,—though not with all his fuss and hypocrisy.——Thou shouldst not have said that, *Trim*,

said my uncle *Toby*,—for God only knows who is a hypocrite, and who is not: ——At the great and general review of us all, corporal, at the day of judgment (and not till then)—it will be seen who has done their duties in this world,—and who has not; and we shall be advanced, *Trim*, accordingly.——I hope we shall, said *Trim*.——It is in the Scripture, said my uncle *Toby*: and I will shew it thee to-morrow:—In the mean time we may depend upon it, *Trim*, for our comfort, said my uncle *Toby*, that God Almighty is so good and just a governor of the world, that if we have but done our duties in it,—it will never be enquired into, whether we have done them in a red coat or a black one:——I hope not, said the corporal——But go on, *Trim*, said my uncle *Toby*, with thy story.

When I went up, continued the corporal, into the lieutenant's room, which I did not do till the expiration of the ten minutes,—he was lying in his bed with his head raised upon his hand, with his elbow upon the pillow, and a clean white cambrick handkerchief beside it:——The youth was just stooping down to take up the cushion, upon which I supposed he had been kneeling,—the book was laid upon the bed,—and, as he rose, in taking up the cushion with one hand, he reached out his other to take it away at the same time.——Let it remain there, my dear, said the lieutenant.

He did not offer to speak to me, till I had walked up close to his bed-side:—If you are captain *Shandy's* servant, said he, you must present my thanks to your master, with my little boy's thanks along with them, for his courtesy to me;—if he was of *Leven's*—said the lieutenant.—I told him your honour was.—Then, said he, I served three campaigns with him in *Flanders*, and remember him,—but 'tis most likely, as I had not the honour of any acquaintance with him, that he knows nothing of me.—You will tell

him, however, that the person his good-nature has laid under obligations to him, is one *Le Fevre*, a lieutenant in *Angus's*——but he knows me not,—said he, a second time, musing;——possibly he may my story—added he—pray tell the captain I was the ensign at *Breda*, whose wife was most unfortunately killed with a musket-shot, as she lay in my arms in my tent.——I remember the story an't please your honour, said I, very well.——Do you so? said he, wiping his eyes with his handkerchief,—then well may I.—In saying this, he drew a little ring out of his bosom, which seemed tied with a black ribband about his neck, and kiss'd it twice——Here, *Billy*, said he,——the boy flew across the room to the bed-side,—and falling down upon his knee, took the ring in his hand, and kissed it too, —then kissed his father, and sat down upon the bed and wept.

I wish, said my uncle *Toby*, with a deep sigh,—I wish, *Trim*, I was asleep.

Your honour, replied the corporal, is too much concerned;—shall I pour your honour out a glass of sack to your pipe?——Do, *Trim*, said my uncle *Toby*.

I remember, said my uncle *Toby*, sighing again, the story of the ensign and his wife, with a circumstance his modesty omitted;—and particularly well that he, as well as she, upon some account or other (I forget what) was universally pitied by the whole regiment;—but finish the story thou art upon:—'Tis finished already, said the corporal,—for I could stay no longer,—so wished his honour a good night; young *Le Fevre* rose from off the bed, and saw me to the bottom of the stairs; and as we went down together, told me, they had come from *Ireland*, and were on their route to join the regiment in *Flanders*.——But alas! said the corporal,—the lieutenant's last day's march is over.—Then what is to become of his poor boy? cried my uncle *Toby*.

It was to my uncle *Toby's* eternal honour,——though I tell it only for the sake of those, who, when coop'd in betwixt a natural and a positive law, know not, for their souls, which way in the world to turn themselves—— That notwithstanding my uncle *Toby* was warmly engaged at that time in carrying on the siege of *Dendermond*, parallel with the allies, who pressed theirs on so vigorously, that they scarce allowed him time to get his dinner——that nevertheless he gave up *Dendermond*, though he had already made a lodgment upon the counterscarp;—and bent his whole thoughts towards the private distresses at the inn; and except that he ordered the garden gate to be bolted up, by which he might be said to have turned the siege of *Dendermond* into a blockade,—he left *Dendermond* to itself—to be relieved or not by the *French* king, as the *French* king thought good; and only considered how he himself should relieve the poor lieutenant and his son.

——That kind Being, who is a friend to the friendless, shall recompence thee for this.

Thou hast left this matter short, said my uncle *Toby* to the corporal, as he was putting him to bed,——and I will tell thee in what, *Trim*.——In the first place, when thou madest an offer of my services to *Le Fevre*,——as sickness and travelling are both expensive, and thou knowest he was but a poor lieutenant, with a son to subsist as well as himself out of his pay,—that thou didst not make an offer to him of my purse; because, had he stood in need, thou knowest, *Trim*, he had been as welcome to it as myself.—— Your honour knows, said the corporal, I had no orders;—— True, quoth my uncle *Toby*,—thou didst very right, *Trim*, as a soldier,—but certainly very wrong as a man.

In the second place, for which, indeed, thou hast the same excuse, continued my uncle *Toby*,——when thou offeredst him whatever was in my house,——thou shouldst

have offered him my house too:——A sick brother officer should have the best quarters, *Trim*, and if we had him with us,—we could tend and look to him:——Thou art an excellent nurse thyself, *Trim*,—and what with thy care of him, and the old woman's, and his boy's, and mine together, we might recruit him again at once, and set him upon his legs.———

——In a fortnight or three weeks, added my uncle *Toby*, smiling, ——he might march.——He will never march; an' please your honour, in this world, said the corporal:——He will march, said my uncle *Toby*, rising up from the side of the bed, with one shoe off:——An' please your honour, said the corporal, he will never march but to his grave:——He shall march, cried my uncle *Toby*, marching the foot which had a shoe on, though without advancing an inch,—he shall march to his regiment.——He cannot stand it, said the corporal;——He shall be supported, said my uncle *Toby*:——He'll drop at last, said the corporal, and what will become of his boy?——He shall not drop, said my uncle *Toby*, firmly.——A-well-o'day,—do what we can for him, said *Trim*, maintaining his point,—the poor soul will die:——He shall not die, by G—, cried my uncle *Toby*.

—The ACCUSING SPIRIT, which flew up to heaven's chancery with the oath, blush'd as he gave it in;—and the RECORDING ANGEL, as he wrote it down, dropp'd a tear upon the word, and blotted it out for ever.

My uncle *Toby* went to his bureau,—put his purse into his breeches pocket, and having ordered the corporal to go early in the morning for a physician,—he went to bed, and fell asleep.

The sun looked bright the morning after, to every eye in the village but *Le Fevre's* and his afflicted son's; the hand of death press'd heavy upon his eyelids,——and hardly

could the wheel at the cistern turn round its circle,—when my uncle *Toby*, who had rose up an hour before his wonted time, entered the lieutenant's room, and without preface or apology, sat himself down upon the chair by the bed-side, and independently of all modes and customs, opened the curtain in the manner an old friend and brother officer would have done it, and asked him how he did,—how he had rested in the night,—what was his complaint,—where was his pain,—and what he could do to help him:——and without giving him time to answer any one of the enquiries, went on, and told him of the little plan which he had been concerting with the corporal the night before for him.——

——You shall go home directly, *Le Fevre*, said my uncle *Toby*, to my house,—and we'll send for a doctor to see what's the matter,—and we'll have an apothecary,—and the corporal shall be your nurse:——and I'll be your servant, *Le Fevre*.

There was a frankness in my uncle *Toby*,—not the *effect* of familiarity,—but the *cause* of it,—which let you at once into his soul, and shewed you the goodness of his nature; to this, there was something in his looks, and voice, and manner, superadded, which eternally beckoned to the unfortunate to come and take shelter under him; so that before my uncle *Toby* had half finished the kind offers he was making to the father, had the son insensibly pressed up close to his knees, and had taken hold of the breast of his coat, and was pulling it towards him.——The blood and spirits of *Le Fevre*, which were waxing cold and slow within him, and were retreating to their last citadel, the heart,—rallied back,—the film forsook his eyes for a moment,—he looked up wishfully in my uncle *Toby's* face,—then cast a look upon his boy,——and that *ligament*, fine as it was,—was never broken.———

Nature instantly ebb'd again,—the film returned to its place,——the pulse fluttered——stopp'd——went on ——throbb'd——stopp'd again——moved——stopp'd—— shall I go on?——No.

## Effie Deans in Prison[1]

*Sir Walter Scott* (1771–1832)

[Jeanie Deans meets her sister Effie in the old Tolbooth Prison, Edinburgh. Effie is accused of constructive child-murder, having concealed the birth of her child, who has disappeared. Ratcliffe, a former smuggler, is gaoler of the Tolbooth.]

Jeanie Deans was admitted into the jail by Ratcliffe. This fellow, as void of shame as of honesty, as he opened the now trebly secured door, asked her, with a leer which made her shudder, "whether she remembered him?"

A half-pronounced and timid "No" was her answer.

"What! not remember moonlight, and Muschat's Cairn and Rob and Rat?" said he, with the same sneer. "Your memory needs redding up, my jo."

If Jeanie's distresses had admitted of aggravation, it must have been to find her sister under the charge of such a profligate as this man. He was not, indeed, without something of good to balance so much that was evil in his character and habits. In his misdemeanours he had never been bloodthirsty or cruel; and in his present occupation he had shown himself, in a certain degree, accessible to touches of humanity. But these good qualities were unknown to Jeanie, who, remembering the scene at Muschat's Cairn, could scarce find voice to acquaint him that she

[1] From *The Heart of Midlothian.*

had an order from Bailie Middleburgh, permitting her to see her sister.

"I ken that fu' weel, my bonny doo; mair by token, I have a special charge to stay in the ward with you a' the time ye are thegither."

"Must that be sae?" asked Jeanie, with an imploring voice.

"Hout, ay, hinny," replied the turnkey; "and what the waur will you and your tittie be of Jim Ratcliffe hearing what ye hae to say to ilk other? Deil a word ye'll say that will gar him ken your kittle sex better than he kens them already; and another thing is, that, if ye dinna speak o' breaking the tolbooth, deil a word will I tell ower, either to do ye good or ill."

Thus saying, Ratcliffe marshalled her the way to the apartment where Effie was confined.

Shame, fear, and grief had contended for mastery in the poor prisoner's bosom during the whole morning, while she had looked forward to this meeting; but when the door opened, all gave way to a confused and strange feeling that had a tinge of joy in it, as, throwing herself on her sister's neck, she ejaculated, "My dear Jeanie! my dear Jeanie! it's lang since I hae seen ye." Jeanie returned the embrace with an earnestness that partook almost of rapture, but it was only a flitting emotion, like a sunbeam unexpectedly penetrating betwixt the clouds of a tempest, and obscured almost as soon as visible. The sisters walked together to the side of the pallet bed, and sat down side by side, took hold of each other's hands, and looked each other in the face, but without speaking a word. In this posture they remained for a minute, while the gleam of joy gradually faded from their features, and gave way to the most intense expression, first of melancholy, and then of agony, till, throwing themselves again

into each other's arms, they, to use the language of Scripture, lifted up their voices and wept bitterly.

Even the hard-hearted turnkey, who had spent his life in scenes calculated to stifle both conscience and feeling, could not witness this scene without a touch of human sympathy. It was shown in a trifling action, but which had more delicacy in it than seemed to belong to Ratcliffe's character and station. The unglazed window of the miserable chamber was open, and the beams of a bright sun fell right upon the bed where the sufferers were seated. With a gentleness that had something of reverence in it, Ratcliffe partly closed the shutter, and seemed thus to throw a veil over a scene so sorrowful.

"Ye are ill, Effie," were the first words Jeanie could utter—"ye are very ill."

"Oh, what wad I gie to be ten times waur, Jeanie!" was the reply—"what wad I gie to be cauld dead afore the ten-o'clock bell the morn! And our father—but I am his bairn nae langer now! Oh, I hae nae friend left in the warld! Oh, that I were lying dead at my mother's side in Newbattle kirkyard!"

"Hout, lassie," said Ratcliffe, willing to show the interest which he absolutely felt, "dinna be sae dooms downhearted as a' that; there's mony a tod hunted that's no killed. Advocate Langtale has brought folk through waur snappers than a' this, and there's no a cleverer agent than Nichil Novit e'er drew a bill of suspension. Hanged or unhanged, they are well aff has sic an agent and counsel; ane's sure o' fair play. Ye are a bonny lass, too, an ye wad busk up your cockernonie a bit; and a bonny lass will find favour wi' judge and jury, when they would strap up a grewsome carle like me for the fifteenth part of a flea's hide and tallow, d—n them."

To this homely strain of consolation the mourners re-

turned no answer; indeed, they were so much lost in their own sorrows as to have become insensible of Ratcliffe's presence. "Oh, Effie," said her elder sister, "how could you conceal your situation from me? Oh, woman, had I deserved this at your hand? Had ye spoke but ae word—sorry we might hae been, and shamed we might hae been, but this awfu' dispensation had never come ower us."

"And what gude wad that hae dune?" answered the prisoner. "Na, na, Jeanie, a' was ower when ance I forgot what I promised when I faulded down the leaf of my Bible. See," she said, producing the sacred volume, "the book opens aye at the place o' itsell. Oh see, Jeanie, what a fearfu' scripture!"

Jeanie took her sister's Bible, and found that the fatal mark was made at this impressive text in the book of Job: "He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone. And mine hope hath he removed like a tree."

"Isna that ower true a doctrine?" said the prisoner: "isna my crown, my honour removed? And what am I but a poor wasted, wan-thriven tree, dug up by the roots and flung out to waste in the highway, that man and beast may tread it underfoot? I thought o' the bonny bit thorn that our father rooted out o' the yard last May, when it had a' the flush o' blossoms on it; and then it lay in the court till the beasts had trod them a' to pieces wi' their feet. I little thought, when I was wae for the bit silly green bush and its flowers, that I was to gang the same gate mysell."

"Oh, if ye had spoken ae word," again sobbed Jeanie—"if I were free to swear that ye had said but ae word of how it stude wi' ye, they couldna hae touched your life this day."

"Could they na?" said Effie, with something like awakened interest, for life is dear even to those who feel it as a burden. "Wha tauld ye that, Jeanie?"

"It was ane that kend what he was saying well eneugh," replied Jeanie, who had a natural reluctance at mentioning even the name of her sister's seducer.

"Wha was it? I conjure ye to tell me," said Effie, seating herself upright. "Wha could tak interest in sic a cast-bye as I am now? Was it—was it *him?*"

"Hout," said Ratcliffe, "what signifies keeping the poor lassie in a swither? I'se uphaud it's been Robertson that learned ye that doctrine when ye saw him at Muschat's Cairn."

"Was it him?" said Effie, catching eagerly at his words—"was it him, Jeanie, indeed? Oh, I see it was him, poor lad; and I was thinking his heart was as hard as the nether millstane; and him in sic danger on his ain part—poor George!"

Somewhat indignant at this burst of tender feeling toward the author of her misery, Jeanie could not help exclaiming, "Oh, Effie, how can ye speak that gate of sic a man as that?"

"We maun forgie our enemies, ye ken," said poor Effie, with a timid look and a subdued voice; for her conscience told her what a different character the feelings with which she still regarded her seducer bore, compared with the Christian charity under which she attempted to veil it.

"And ye hae suffered a' this for him, and ye can think of loving him still?" said her sister, in a voice betwixt pity and blame.

"Love him!" answered Effie. "If I hadna loved as woman seldom loves, I hadna been within these wa's this day; and trow ye that love sic as mine is lightly forgotten? Na, na, ye may hew down the tree, but ye canna change its

bend. And, oh, Jeanie, if ye wad do good to me at this moment, tell me every word that he said, and whether he was sorry for poor Effie or no!"

"What needs I tell ye onything about it?" said Jeanie. "Ye may be sure he had ower muckle to do to save himsell, to speak lang or muckle about onybody beside."

"That's no true, Jeanie, though a saunt had said it," replied Effie, with a sparkle of her former lively and irritable temper. "But ye dinna ken, though I do, how far he pat his life in venture to save mine." And looking at Ratcliffe, she checked herself and was silent.

"I fancy," said Ratcliffe, with one of his familiar sneers, "the lassie thinks that naebody has een but hersell. Didna I see when Gentle Geordie was seeking to get other folk out of the tolbooth forbye Jack Porteous? But ye are of my mind, hinny: better sit and rue than flit and rue. Ye needna look in my face sae amazed. I ken mair things than that, maybe."

"Oh my God! my God!" said Effie, springing up and throwing herself down on her knees before him. "D'ye ken where they hae putten my bairn? Oh, my bairn! my bairn! the poor sackless innocent new-born wee ane—bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh! Oh man, if ye wad e'er deserve a portion in heaven, or a broken-hearted creature's blessing upon earth, tell me where they hae put my bairn—the sign of my shame, and the partner of my suffering! tell me wha has taen 't away, or what they hae dune wi't!"

"Hout tout," said the turnkey, endeavouring to extricate himself from the firm grasp with which she held him, "that's taking me at my word wi' a witness. Bairn, quo' she? How the deil suld I ken onything of your bairn, huzzy? Ye maun ask that of auld Meg Murdockson, if ye dinna ken ower muckle about it yoursell."

As his answer destroyed the wild and vague hope which had suddenly gleamed upon her, the unhappy prisoner let go her hold of his coat, and fell with her face on the pavement of the apartment in a strong convulsion fit.

Jeanie Deans possessed, with her excellently clear understanding, the concomitant advantage of promptitude of spirit, even in the extremity of distress.

She did not suffer herself to be overcome by her own feelings of exquisite sorrow, but instantly applied herself to her sister's relief, with the readiest remedies which circumstances afforded; and which, to do Ratcliffe justice, he showed himself anxious to suggest, and alert in procuring. He had even the delicacy to withdraw to the farthest corner of the room, so as to render his official attendance upon them as little intrusive as possible, when Effie was composed enough again to resume her conference with her sister.

The prisoner once more, in the most earnest and broken tones, conjured Jeanie to tell her the particulars of the conference with Robertson, and Jeanie felt it was impossible to refuse her this gratification.

"Do ye mind," she said, "Effie, when ye were in the fever before we left Woodend, and how angry your mother, that's now in a better place, was wi' me for gieing ye milk and water to drink, because ye grat for it? Ye were a bairn then, and ye are a woman now, and should ken better than ask what canna but hurt you. But come weal or woe, I canna refuse ye onything that ye ask me wi' the tear in your ee."

Again Effie threw herself into her arms, and kissed her cheek and forehead, murmuring, "Oh, if ye kend how lang it is since I heard his name mentioned! if ye but kend how muckle good it does me but to ken onything o' him that's

like goodness or kindness, ye wadna wonder that I wish to hear o' him!"

Jeanie sighed, and commenced her narrative of all that had passed betwixt Robertson and her, making it as brief as possible. Effie listened in breathless anxiety, holding her sister's hand in hers, and keeping her eye fixed upon her face, as if devouring every word she uttered. The interjections of "Poor fellow!"—"Poor George!" which escaped in whispers, and betwixt sighs, were the only sounds with which she interrupted the story. When it was finished she made a long pause.

"And this was his advice?" were the first words she uttered.

"Just sic as I hae tell'd ye," replied her sister.

"And he wanted you to say something to yon folks that wad save my young life?"

"He wanted," answered Jeanie, "that I suld be mansworn."

"And you tauld him," said Effie, "that ye wadna hear o' coming between me and the death that I am to die, and me no aughteen year auld yet?"

"I told him," replied Jeanie, who now trembled at the turn which her sister's reflections seemed about to take, "that I daured na swear to an untruth."

"And what d'ye ca' an untruth?" said Effie, again showing a touch of her former spirit. "Ye are muckle to blame, lass, if ye think a mother would, or could, murder her ain bairn. Murder! I wad hae laid down my life just to see a blink o' its ee!"

"I do believe," said Jeanie, "that ye are as innocent of sic a purpose as the new-born babe itsell."

"I am glad ye do me that justice," said Effie, haughtily; "it's whiles the faut of very good folk like you, Jeanie, that they think a' the rest of the warld are as bad as the warst temptations can make them."

"I dinna deserve this frae ye, Effie," said her sister, sobbing, and feeling at once the injustice of the reproach and compassion for the state of mind which dictated it.

"Maybe no, sister," said Effie. "But ye are angry because I love Robertson. How can I help loving him that loves me better than body and soul baith? Here he put his life in a niffer, to break the prison to let me out; and sure am I, had it stood wi' him as it stands wi' you—" Here she paused and was silent.

"Oh, if it stude wi' me to save ye wi' risk of *my* life!" said Jeanie.

"Ay, lass," said her sister, "that's lightly said, but no sae lightly credited, frae ane that winna ware a word for me; and if it be a wrang word, ye'll hae time eneugh to repent o't."

"But that word is a grievous sin, and it's a deeper offence when it's a sin wilfully and presumptuously committed."

"Weel, weel, Jeanie," said Effie, "I mind a' about the sins o' presumption in the questions; we'll speak nae mair about this matter, and ye may save your breath to say your carritch; and for me, I'll soon hae nae breath to waste on onybody."

"I must needs say," interposed Ratcliffe, "that it's d—d hard, when three words of your mouth would give the girl the chance to nick Moll Blood [1] that you make such scruplng about rapping [2] to them. D—n me, if they would take me, if I would not rap to all Whatd'yecallum's—Hyssop's Fables—for her life; I am us'd to 't, b—t me, for less matters. Why, I have smacked calfskin [3] fifty times in England for a keg of brandy."

"Never speak mair o't," said the prisoner. "It's just

[1] The gallows. [2] Swearing. [3] Kissed the book.

as weel as it is; and gude day, sister, ye keep Mr. Ratcliffe waiting on. Ye'll come back and see me, I reckon, before—" Here she stopped and became deadly pale.

"And are we to part in this way," said Jeanie, "and you in sic deadly peril? Oh, Effie, look up and say what ye wad hae me to do, and I could find in my heart amaist to say that I wad do 't."

"No, Jeanie," replied her sister, after an effort, "I am better minded now. At my best, I was never half sae gude as ye were, and what for suld you begin to mak yoursell waur to save me, now that I am no worth saving? God knows that in my sober mind I wadna wuss ony living creature to do a wrang thing to save my life. I might have fled frae this tolbooth on that awfu' night wi' ane wad hae carried me through the warld, and friended me, and fended for me. But I said to them, let life gang when gude fame is gane before it. But this lang imprisonment has broken my spirit, and I am whiles sair left to mysell, and then I wad gie the Indian mines of gold and diamonds just for life and breath; for I think, Jeanie, I have such roving fits as I used to hae in the fever; but instead of the fiery een, and wolves, and Widow Butler's bullsegg, that I used to see speiling up on my bed, I am thinking now about a high black gibbet, and me standing up, and such seas of faces all looking up at poor Effie Deans, and asking if it be her that George Robertson used to call the Lily of St. Leonard's. And then they stretch out their faces, and make mouths, and girn at me, and whichever way I look, I see a face laughing like Meg Murdockson, when she tauld me I had seen the last of my wean. God preserve us, Jeanie, that carline has a fearsome face!" She clapped her hands before her eyes as she uttered this exclamation, as if to secure herself against seeing the fearful object she had alluded to.

Jeanie Deans remained with her sister for two hours, during which she endeavoured, if possible, to extract something from her that might be serviceable in her exculpation. But she had nothing to say beyond what she had declared on her first examination, with the purport of which the reader will be made acquainted in proper time and place. "They wadna believe her," she said, "and she had naething mair to tell them."

At length Ratcliffe, though reluctantly, informed the sisters that there was a necessity that they should part. "Mr. Novit," he said, "was to see the prisoner, and maybe Mr. Langtale too. Langtale likes to look at a bonny lass, whether in prison or out o' prison."

Reluctantly, therefore, and slowly, after many a tear and many an embrace, Jeanie retired from the apartment, and heard its jarring bolts turned upon the dear being from whom she was separated. Somewhat familiarized now even with her rude conductor, she offered him a small present in money, with a request he would do what he could for her sister's accommodation. To her surprise, Ratcliffe declined the fee. "I wasna bloody when I was on the pad," he said, "and I winna be greedy—that is, beyond what's right and reasonable—now that I am in the lock. Keep the siller; and for civility, your sister shall hae sic as I can bestow. But I hope you'll think better on it, and rap an oath for her; deil a hair ill there is in it, if ye are rapping again the crown. I kend a worthy minister, as gude a man, bating the deed they deposed him for, as ever ye heard claver in a pu'pit, that rapped to a hogshead of pigtail tobacco, just for as muckle as filled his spleuchan.[1] But maybe ye are keeping your ain counsel; weel, weel, there's nae harm in that. As for your sister, I'se see that

[1] Tobacco pouch.

she gets her meat clean and warm, and I'll try to gar her lie down and take a sleep after dinner, for deil a ee she'll close the night. I hae gude experience of these matters. The first night is aye the warst o't. I hae never heard o' ane that sleepit the night afore trial, but of mony a ane that sleepit as sound as a tap the night before their necks were straughted. And it's nae wonder; the warst may be tholed when it's kend. Better a finger aff as aye wagging."

## Frankenstein Creates a Soulless Man[1]

*Mrs. Shelley* (1797–1851)

One of the phenomena which had peculiarly attracted my attention was the structure of the human frame, and, indeed, any animal endued with life. Whence, I often asked myself, did the principle of life proceed? It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered as a mystery; yet with how many things are we upon the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries. I revolved these circumstances in my mind, and determined thenceforth to apply myself more particularly to those branches of natural philosophy which relate to physiology. Unless I had been animated by an almost supernatural enthusiasm, my application to this study would have been irksome, and almost intolerable. To examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death. I became acquainted with the science of anatomy; but this was not sufficient; I must also observe the natural decay and corruption of the human body.

I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted;

[1] From *Frankenstein.*

I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain. I paused, examining and analyzing all the minutiæ of causation, as exemplified in the change from life to death, and death to life, until from the midst of this darkness a sudden light broke in upon me—a light so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple, that while I became dizzy with the immensity of prospect which it illustrated, I was surprised that among so many men of genius, who had directed their inquiries toward the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret.

After days and nights of incredible labor and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.

The astonishment which I had at first experienced on this discovery soon gave place to delight and rapture. After so much time spent in painful labor to arrive at once at the summit of my desires was the most gratifying consummation of my toils. But this discovery was so great and overwhelming, that all the steps by which I had been progressively led to it were obliterated, and I beheld only the result. What had been the study and desire of the wisest men since the creation of the world, was now within my grasp.

Although I possessed the capacity of bestowing animation, yet to prepare a frame for the reception of it, with all its intricacies of fibres, muscles, and veins, still remained a work of inconceivable difficulty and labor. I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a being like myself or one of simpler organization; but my imagination was too much exalted by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex

and wonderful as man. The materials at present within my command hardly appeared adequate to so arduous an undertaking, but I doubted not that I should ultimately succeed.

No one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onward, like a hurricane, in the first enthusiasm of success. Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs. Pursuing these reflections, I thought that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption.

These thoughts supported my spirits, while I pursued my undertaking with unremitting ardor. My cheek had grown pale with study, and my person had become emaciated with confinement. Sometimes, on the very brink of certainty, I failed; yet still I clung to the hope which the next day or the next hour might realize. One secret which I alone possessed was the hope to which I had dedicated myself; and the moon gazed on my midnight labors, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding-places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble and my eyes swim with the remembrance; but then a resistless and almost frantic impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. It was indeed but a passing trance, that

only made me feel with renewed acuteness so soon as, the unnatural stimulus ceasing to operate, I had returned to my old habits. I collected bones from charnel-houses, and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation; my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting-room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, while, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion.

The summer months passed while I was thus engaged, heart and soul, in one pursuit. It was a most beautiful season; never did the fields bestow a more plentiful harvest, or the vines yield a more luxuriant vintage; but my eyes were insensible to the charms of nature.

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull-yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom, with such infinite pains and care, I had endeavored to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely cov-

ered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same color as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight, black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardor that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, and continued a long time traversing my bedchamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured; and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavoring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window-shutters, I beheld the wretch, the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks.

He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed down-stairs. I took refuge in the courtyard be-

longing to the house which I inhabited; where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! no mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then; but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

## The Gypsy's Philosophy[1]

*George Borrow* (1803–1881)

I now wandered along the heath, until I came to a place where, beside a thick furze, sat a man, his eyes fixed intently on the red ball of the setting sun.

"That's not you, Jasper?"

"Indeed, brother!"

"I've not seen you for years."

"How should you, brother?"

"What brings you here?"

"To fight, brother."

"Where are the tents?"

"On the old spot, brother."

"Any news since we parted?"

"Two deaths, brother."

"Who are dead, Jasper?"

"Father and mother, brother."

[1] From *Lavengro.*

"Where did they die?"

"Where they were sent, brother."

"And Mrs. Herne?"

"She's alive, brother."

"Where is she now?"

"In Yorkshire, brother."

"What is your opinion of death, Mr. Petulengro?" said I, as I sat down beside him.

"My opinion of death, brother, is much the same as that in the old song of Pharaoh, which I have heard my grandam sing:

"'Canna marel o manus chivios andé puv,
Ta rovel pa leste o chavo ta romi.'

"When a man dies, he is cast into the earth and his wife and child sorrow over him. If he has neither wife nor child, then his father and mother, I suppose; and if he is quite alone in the world, why, then, he is cast into the earth, and there is an end of the matter."

"And do you think that is the end of man?"

"There's an end of him, brother, more's the pity."

"Why do you say so?"

"Life is sweet, brother."

"Do you think so?"

"Think so! There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon, and stars, brother, all sweet things; there's likewise a wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother. Who would wish to die?"

"I would wish to die—"

"You talk like a gorgio—which is the same as talking like a fool—were you a Rommany chal you would talk wiser. Wish to die, indeed! A Rommany chal would wish to live forever!"

"In sickness, Jasper?"

"There's the sun and stars, brother."

"In blindness, Jasper?"

"There's the wind on the heath, brother; if I could only feel that, I would gladly live forever. Dosta, we'll now go to the tents and put on the gloves; and I'll try to make you feel what a sweet thing it is to be alive, brother!"

## The Flight of Eliza[1]

*Harriet Beecher Stowe* (1811–1896)

[Eliza has heard her master, Mr. Shelby, making arrangements to sell her boy, Harry, to Haley the slave-trader. She escapes with him in her arms, directing her flight toward the Ohio, hoping to reach Canada, where she will be safe.]

"Mother, I don't need to keep awake, do I?"

"No, my darling; sleep, if you want to."

"But, mother, if I do get asleep, you won't let him get me?"

"No! so may God help me!" said his mother, with a paler cheek and a brighter light in her large, dark eyes.

"You're *sure*, a'n't you, mother?"

"Yes, *sure!*" said the mother, in a voice that startled herself; for it seemed to her to come from a spirit within, that was no part of her; and the boy dropped his little weary head on her shoulder and was soon asleep. How the touch of those warm arms, and gentle breathings that came in her neck, seemed to add fire and spirit to her movements. It seemed to her as if strength poured into her in electric streams, from every gentle touch and movement of the sleeping, confiding child. Sublime is the dominion of the mind over the body, that, for a time, can

[1] From *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

make flesh and nerve impregnable, and string the sinews like steel, so that the weak become so mighty.

The boundaries of the farm, the grove, the wood-lot, passed by her dizzily as she walked on; and still she went, leaving one familiar object after another, slacking not, pausing not, till reddening daylight found her many a long mile from all traces of any familiar objects upon the open highway.

She had often been, with her mistress, to visit some connections, in the little village of T——, not far from the Ohio River, and knew the road well. To go thither, to escape across the Ohio River, were the first hurried outlines of her plan of escape; beyond that she could only hope in God.

When horses and vehicles began to move along the highway, with that alert perception peculiar to a state of excitement, and which seems to be a sort of inspiration, she became aware that her headlong pace and distracted air might bring on her remark and suspicion. She therefore put the boy on the ground, and, adjusting her dress and bonnet, she walked on at as rapid a pace as she thought consistent with the preservation of appearances. In her little bundle she had provided a store of cakes and apples, which she used as expedients for quickening the speed of the child, rolling the apple some yards before them, when the boy would run with all his might after it; and this ruse, often repeated, carried them over many a half-mile.

After a while they came to a thick patch of woodland, through which murmured a clear brook. As the child complained of hunger and thirst, she climbed over the fence with him; and, sitting down behind a large rock which concealed them from the road, she gave him a breakfast out of her little package. The boy wondered and grieved that she could not eat; and when, putting his

arms round her neck, he tried to wedge some of his cake into her mouth, it seemed to her that the rising in her throat would choke her.

"No, no, Harry darling! mother can't eat till you are safe! We must go on—on—till we come to the river!" And she hurried again into the road, and again constrained herself to walk regularly and composedly forward.

She was many miles past any neighborhood where she was personally known. If she should chance to meet any who knew her, she reflected that the well-known kindness of the family would be of itself a blind to suspicion, as making it an unlikely supposition that she could be a fugitive. As she was also so white as not to be known as of colored lineage, without a critical survey, and her child was white also, it was much easier for her to pass on unsuspected.

On this presumption she stopped at noon at a neat farmhouse to rest herself and buy some dinner for her child and self; for, as the danger decreased with the distance, the supernatural tension of the nervous system lessened, and she found herself both weary and hungry.

The good woman, kindly and gossiping, seemed rather pleased than otherwise with having somebody come in to talk with; and accepted, without examination, Eliza's statement, that she "was going on a little piece, to spend a week with her friends," all which she hoped in her heart might prove strictly true.

An hour before sunset she entered the village of T——, by the Ohio River, weary and footsore, but still strong in heart. Her first glance was at the river, which lay, like Jordan, between her and the Canaan of liberty on the other side.

It was now early spring, and the river was swollen and turbulent; great cakes of floating ice were swinging heavily

to and fro in the turbid waters. Owing to the peculiar form of the shore on the Kentucky side, the land bending far out into the water, the ice had been lodged and detained in great quantities, and the narrow channel which swept round the bend was full of ice, piled one cake over another, thus forming a temporary barrier to the descending ice, which lodged, and formed a great, undulating raft, filling up the whole river, and extending almost to the Kentucky shore.

Eliza stood, for a moment, contemplating this unfavorable aspect of things, which she saw at once must prevent the usual ferry-boat from running, and then turned into a small public house on the bank, to make a few inquiries.

The hostess, who was busy in various fizzing and stewing operations over the fire, preparatory to the evening meal, stopped, with a fork in her hand, as Eliza's sweet and plaintive voice arrested her.

"What is it?" she said.

"Isn't there any ferry or boat that takes people over to B——, now?" she said.

"No, indeed!" said the woman; "the boats has stopped running."

Eliza's look of dismay and disappointment struck the woman, and she said, inquiringly:

"Maybe you're wanting to get over? Anybody sick? Ye seem mighty anxious?"

"I've got a child that's very dangerous," said Eliza. "I never heard of it till last night, and I've walked quite a piece to-day, in hopes to get to the ferry."

"Well, now, that's onlucky," said the woman, whose motherly sympathies were much aroused; "I'm re'lly consarned for ye. Solomon!" she called, from the window, toward a small back building. A man in leather apron and very dirty hands appeared at the door.

"I say, Sol," said the woman, "is that ar man going to tote them bar'ls over to-night?"

"He said he should try, if 't was any way prudent," said the man.

"There's a man a piece down here, that's going over with some truck this evening, if he durs' to; he'll be in here to supper to-night, so you'd better set down and wait. That's a sweet little fellow," added the woman, offering him a cake.

But the child, wholly exhausted, cried with weariness.

"Poor fellow! he isn't used to walking, and I've hurried him on so," said Eliza.

"Well, take him into this room," said the woman, opening into a small bedroom, where stood a comfortable bed. Eliza laid the weary boy upon it, and held his hands in hers till he was fast asleep. For her there was no rest. As a fire in her bones, the thought of the pursuer urged her on; and she gazed with longing eyes on the sullen, surging waters that lay between her and liberty.

Here we must take our leave of her for the present, to follow the course of her pursuers.

At two o'clock Sam and Andy brought the horses up to the posts, apparently greatly refreshed and invigorated by the scamper of the morning.

Sam was there new oiled from dinner, with an abundance of zealous and ready officiousness. As Haley approached, he was boasting, in flourishing style, to Andy of the evident and eminent success of the operation, now that he had "farly come to it."

"Your master, I s'pose, don't keep no dogs," said Haley, thoughtfully, as he prepared to mount.

"Heaps on 'em," said Sam, triumphantly; "thar's Bruno, he's a roarer! And, besides that, 'bout every nigger of us keeps a pup of some natur or uther."

"Poh!" said Haley; and he said something else, too, with regard to the said dogs, at which Sam muttered:

"I don't see no use cussin' on 'em, no way."

"But your master don't keep no dogs (I pretty much know he don't) for trackin' out niggers."

Sam knew exactly what he meant, but he kept on a look of earnest and desperate simplicity.

"Our dogs all smells round consid'able sharp. I spect they's the kind, though they hain't never had no practice. They's *far* dogs, though, at 'most anything, if you'd get 'em started. Here, Bruno," he called, whistling to the lumbering Newfoundland, who came pitching tumultuously toward them.

"You go hang!" said Haley, getting up. "Come, tumble up now."

Sam tumbled up accordingly, dexterously contriving to tickle Andy as he did so, which occasioned Andy to split out into a laugh, greatly to Haley's indignation, who made a cut at him with his riding-whip.

"I's 'stonished at yer, Andy," said Sam, with awful gravity. "This yer's a seris bisness, Andy. Yer mustn't be a-makin' game. This yer a'n't no way to help Mas'r."

"I shall take the straight road to the river," said Haley, decidedly, after they had come to the boundaries of the estate. "I know the way of all of 'em—they makes tracks for the underground."

"Sartin," said Sam, "dat's de idee. Mas'r Haley hits de thing right in de middle. Now, der's two roads to de river—de dirt road and der pike; which Mas'r mean to take?"

Andy looked up innocently at Sam, surprised at hearing this new geographical fact, but instantly confirmed what he said by a vehement reiteration.

"'Cause," said Sam, "I'd rather be 'clined to 'magine that Lizy 'd take de dirt road, bein' it's de least travelled."

Haley, notwithstanding that he was a very old bird, and naturally inclined to be suspicious of chaff, was rather brought up by this view of the case.

"If yer warn't both on yer such cussed liars, now!" he said, contemplatively, as he pondered a moment.

The pensive, reflective tone in which this was spoken appeared to amuse Andy prodigiously, and he drew a little behind, and shook so as apparently to run a great risk of falling off his horse, while Sam's face was immovably composed into the most doleful gravity.

"Course," said Sam, "Mas'r can do as he'd ruther; go de straight road, if Mas'r thinks best; it's all one to us. Now when I study 'pon it, I think the straight road de best, *deridedly*."

"She would naturally go a lonesome way," said Haley, thinking aloud, and not minding Sam's remark.

"Dar ain't no sayin'," said Sam; "gals is peculiar; they never does nothin' ye thinks they will; mose gen'lly the contrary. Gals is nat'lly made contrary; and so, if you thinks they've gone one road, it is sartin' you'd better go t' other, and then you'll be sure to find 'em. Now, my private 'pinion is, Lizy took der dirt road; so I think we'd better take de straight one."

This profound generic view of the female sex did not seem to dispose Haley particularly to the straight road; and he announced decidedly that he should go the other, and asked Sam when they should come to it.

"A little piece ahead," said Sam, giving a wink to Andy with the eye which was on Andy's side of the head; and he added, gravely, "but I've studded on de matter, and I'm quite cl'ar we ought not to go dat ar way. I neb-

ber been over it no way. It's despit lonesome, and we might lose our way. Whar we'd come to, de Lord only knows."

"Nevertheless," said Haley, "I shall go that way."

"Now I think on 't, I think I hearn 'em tell that dat ar road was all fenced up and down by der creek, and thar, a'n't it, Andy?"

Andy wasn't certain; he'd only "hearn tell" about that road, but never been over it. In short, he was strictly non-committal.

Haley, accustomed to strike the balance of probabilities between lies of greater or lesser magnitude, thought that it lay in favor of the dirt road aforesaid. The mention of the thing he thought he perceived was involuntary on Sam's part at first, and his confused attempts to dissuade him he set down to a desperate lying on second thoughts, as being unwilling to implicate Eliza.

When, therefore, Sam indicated the road, Haley plunged briskly into it, followed by Sam and Andy.

Now, the road, in fact, was an old one, that had formerly been a thoroughfare to the river, but abandoned for many years after the laying of the new pike. It was open for about an hour's ride, and after that it was cut across by various farms and fences. Sam knew this fact perfectly well—indeed, the road had been so long closed up, that Andy had never heard of it. He therefore rode along with an air of dutiful submission, only groaning and vociferating occasionally that 'twas "desp't rough, and bad for Jerry's foot."

"Now, I jest give yer warning," said Haley, "I know yer; yer won't get me to turn off this yer road, with all yer fussin',—so you shet up!"

"Mas'r will go his own way!" said Sam, with rueful submission, at the same time winking most portentously to

Andy, whose delight was now very near the explosive point.

Sam was in wonderful spirits—professed to keep a very brisk lookout—at one time exclaiming that he saw "a gal's bonnet" on the top of some distant eminence, or calling to Andy "if that thar warn't 'Lizy' down in the hollow"; always making these exclamations in some rough or craggy part of the road, where the sudden quickening of speed was a special inconvenience to all parties concerned, and thus keeping Haley in a state of constant commotion.

After riding about an hour in this way, the whole party made a precipitate and tumultuous descent into a barnyard belonging to a large farming establishment. Not a soul was in sight, all the hands being employed in the fields; but, as the barn stood conspicuously and plainly square across the road, it was evident that their journey in that direction had reached a decided *finale*.

"Warn't dat ar what I telled Mas'r?" said Sam, with an air of injured innocence. "How does strange gentleman spect to know more about a country dan de natives born and raised?"

"You rascal!" said Haley, "you knew all about this."

"Didn't I tell yer I *know'd*, and yer wouldn't believe me? I telled Mas'r 'twas all shet up, and fenced up, and I didn't spect we could get through — Andy heard me."

It was all too true to be disputed, and the unlucky man had to pocket his wrath with the best grace he was able, and all three faced to the right about, and took up their line of march for the highway.

In consequence of all the various delays, it was about three-quarters of an hour after Eliza had laid her child to sleep in the village tavern that the party came riding into

the same place. Eliza was standing by the window looking out in another direction, when Sam's quick eye caught a glimpse of her. Haley and Andy were two yards behind. At this crisis Sam contrived to have his hat blown off, and uttered a loud and characteristic ejaculation, which startled her at once; she drew suddenly back; the whole train swept by the window round to the front door.

A thousand lives seemed to be concentrated in that one moment to Eliza. Her room opened by a side door to the river. She caught her child, and sprang down the steps toward it. The trader caught a full glimpse of her, just as she was disappearing down the bank; and throwing himself from his horse, and calling loudly on Sam and Andy, he was after her like a hound after a deer. In that dizzy moment her feet to her scarce seemed to touch the ground, and a moment brought her to the water's edge. Right on behind they came; and, nerved with strength such as God gives only to the desperate, with one wild cry and flying leap, she vaulted sheer over the turbid current by the shore, on to the raft of ice beyond. It was a desperate leap—impossible to anything but madness and despair; and Haley, Sam, and Andy instinctively cried out and lifted up their hands as she did it.

The huge green fragment of ice on which she alighted pitched and creaked as her weight came on it, but she stayed there not a moment. With wild cries and desperate energy she leaped to another and still another cake—stumbling, leaping, slipping, springing upward again! Her shoes were gone, her stockings cut from her feet, while blood marked every step; but she saw nothing, felt nothing, till dimly, as in a dream, she saw the Ohio side and a man helping her up the bank.

## Waterloo[1]

*William Makepeace Thackeray* (1811–1863)

All that day, from morning until past sunset, the cannon never ceased to roar. It was dark when the cannonading stopped all of a sudden.

All of us have read of what occurred during that interval. The tale is in every Englishman's mouth; and you and I, who were children when the great battle was won and lost, are never tired of hearing and recounting the history of that famous action. Its remembrance rankles still in the bosoms of millions of the countrymen of those brave men who lost the day. They pant for an opportunity of revenging that humiliation; and if a contest, ending in a victory on their part, should ensue, elating them in their turn, and leaving its cursed legacy of hatred and rage behind to us, there is no end to the so-called glory and shame, and to the alternations of successful and unsuccessful murder, in which two high-spirited nations might engage. Centuries hence, we Frenchmen and Englishmen might be boasting and killing each other still, carrying out bravely the Devil's code of honour.

All our friends took their share and fought like men in the great field. All day long, while the women were praying ten miles away, the lines of the dauntless English infantry were receiving and repelling the furious charges of the French horsemen. Guns which were heard at Brussels were ploughing up their ranks, and comrades falling, and the resolute survivors closing in. Toward evening the attack of the French, repeated and resisted so bravely, slackened in its fury. They had other foes besides the



[1] From *Vanity Fair.*

British to engage, or were preparing for a final onset. It came at last; the columns of the Imperial Guard marched up the hill of Saint Jean, at length and at once to sweep the English from the height which they had maintained all day, and spite of all; unscared by the thunder of the artillery, which hurled death from the English line—the dark rolling column pressed on and up the hill. It seemed almost to crest the eminence, when it began to wave and falter. Then it stopped, still facing the shot. Then at last the English troops rushed from the post from which no enemy had been able to dislodge them, and the Guard turned and fled.

No more firing was heard at Brussels—the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.

## Rawdon Crawley Discovers Becky Unfaithful[1]

*William Makepeace Thackeray* (1811–1863)

[Rawdon Crawley has been arrested for debt and carried to the sponging-house with Becky's connivance, in order that she may have more freedom with Lord Steyne. Rawdon effects his escape, and returns home to his wife unexpectedly.]

Rawdon left her and walked home rapidly. It was nine o'clock at night. He ran across the streets, and the great squares of Vanity Fair, and at length came up breathless opposite his own house. He started back and fell against the railings, trembling as he looked up. The drawing-room windows were blazing with light. She had said that she was in bed and ill. He stood there for some time, the light from the rooms on his pale face.

[1] From *Vanity Fair.*

He took out his door-key and let himself into the house. He could hear laughter in the upper rooms. He was in the ball-dress in which he had been captured the night before. He went silently up the stairs, leaning against the banisters at the stair-head. Nobody was stirring in the house besides—all the servants had been sent away. Rawdon heard laughter within—laughter and singing. Becky was singing a snatch of the song of the night before; a hoarse voice, shouted "Brava! Brava!" It was Lord Steyne's.

Rawdon opened the door and went in. A little table with a dinner was laid out—and wine and plate. Steyne was hanging over the sofa on which Becky sate. The wretched woman was in a brilliant full toilette, her arm, and all her fingers sparkling with bracelets and rings; and the brilliants on her breast which Steyne had given her. He had her hand in his, and was bowing over it to kiss it, when Becky started up with a faint scream as she caught sight of Rawdon's white face. At the next instant she tried a smile, a horrid smile, as if to welcome her husband; and Steyne rose up, grinding his teeth, pale, and with fury in his looks.

He, too, attempted a laugh—and came forward holding out his hand. "What, come back! How d'ye do, Crawley?" he said, the nerves of his mouth twitching as he tried to grin at the intruder.

There was that in Rawdon's face which caused Becky to fling herself before him. "I am innocent, Rawdon," she said; "before God, I am innocent." She clung hold of his coat, of his hands; her own were all covered with serpents, and rings, and baubles. "I am innocent— Say I am innocent," she said to Lord Steyne.

He thought a trap had been laid for him, and was as furious with the wife as with the husband. "You inno-

cent! Damn you," he screamed out. "You innocent! Why, every trinket you have on your body is paid for by me. I have given you thousands of pounds which this fellow has spent, and for which he has sold you. Innocent, by ——! You're as innocent as your mother, the ballet-girl, and your husband the bully. Don't think to frighten me as you have done others. Make way, sir, and let me pass." And Lord Steyne seized up his hat, and, with flame in his eyes, and looking his enemy fiercely in the face, marched upon him, never for a moment doubting that the other would give way.

But Rawdon Crawley, springing out, seized him by the neckcloth, until Steyne, almost strangled, writhed and bent under his arm. "You lie, you dog!" said Rawdon. "You lie, you coward and villain!" And he struck the peer twice over the face with his open hand, and flung him bleeding to the ground. It was all done before Rebecca could interpose. She stood there trembling before him. She admired her husband, strong, brave, and victorious.

"Come here," he said. She came up at once.

"Take off those things." She began, trembling, pulling the jewels from her arms, and the rings from her shaking fingers, and held them all in a heap, quivering and looking up at him. "Throw them down," he said, and she dropped them. He tore the diamond ornament out of her breast, and flung it at Lord Steyne. It cut him on his bald forehead. Steyne wore the scar to his dying day.

"Come up-stairs," Rawdon said to his wife.

"Don't kill me, Rawdon," she said.

He laughed savagely. "I want to see if that man lies about the money as he has about me. Has he given you any?"

"No," said Rebecca, "that is—"

"Give me your keys," Rawdon answered, and they went out together.

Rebecca gave him all the keys but one; and she was in hopes that he would not have remarked the absence of that. It belonged to the little desk which Amelia had given her in early days, and which she kept in a secret place. But Rawdon flung open boxes and wardrobes, throwing the multifarious trumpery of their contents here and there, and at last he found the desk. The woman was forced to open it. It contained papers, love-letters many years old—all sorts of small trinkets and woman's memoranda. And it contained a pocket-book with bank-notes. Some of these were dated ten years back, too, and one was quite a fresh one—a note for a thousand pounds which Lord Steyne had given her.

"Did he give you this?" Rawdon said.

"Yes," Rebecca answered.

"I'll send it to him to-day," Rawdon said (for day had dawned again, and many hours had passed in this search), "and I will pay Briggs, who was kind to the boy, and some of the debts. You will let me know where I shall send the rest to you. You might have spared me a hundred pounds, Becky, out of all this—I have always shared with you."

"I am innocent," said Becky. And he left her without another word.

What were her thoughts when he left her? She remained for hours after he was gone, the sunshine pouring into the room, and Rebecca sitting alone on the bed's edge. The drawers were all opened and their contents scattered about—dresses and feathers, scarfs and trinkets, a heap of tumbled vanities lying in a wreck. Her hair was falling over her shoulders; her gown was torn where Rawdon had wrenched the brilliants out of it. She heard him go down-

stairs a few minutes after he left her, and the door slamming and closing on him. She knew he would never come back. He was gone forever. Would he kill himself?—she thought—not until after he had met Lord Steyne. She thought of her long past life, and all the dismal incidents of it. Ah, how dreary it seemed, how miserable, lonely, and profitless! Should she take laudanum, and end it, too—have done with all hopes, schemes, debts, and triumphs? The French maid found her in this position—sitting in the midst of her miserable ruins with clasped hands and dry eyes. The woman was her accomplice and in Steyne's pay. "Mon Dieu, Madame, what has happened?" she asked.

What *had* happened? Was she guilty or not? She said not; but who could tell what was truth which came from those lips; or if that corrupt heart was in this case pure? All her lies and her schemes, all her selfishness and her wiles, all her wit and genius, had come to this bankruptcy. The woman closed the curtains, and with some entreaty and show of kindness persuaded her mistress to lie down on the bed. Then she went below and gathered up the trinkets which had been lying on the floor since Rebecca dropped them there at her husband's orders, and Lord Steyne went away.

## The Death of Steerforth[1]

*Charles Dickens* (1812–1870)

[David Copperfield is in Yarmouth at the time of the great storm, in which Steerforth, the seducer of little Em'ly, perishes.]

The thunder of the cannon was so loud and incessant, that I could not hear something I much desired to hear,

[1] From *David Copperfield.*

until I made a great exertion and awoke. It was broad day—eight or nine o'clock; the storm raging, in lieu of the batteries; and some one knocking and calling at my door.

"What is the matter?" I cried.

"A wreck! Close by!"

I sprung out of bed and asked, what wreck?

"A schooner, from Spain or Portugal, laden with fruit and wine. Make haste, sir, if you want to see her! It's thought, down on the beach, she'll go to pieces every moment."

The excited voice went clamoring along the staircase; and I wrapped myself in my clothes as quickly as I could and ran into the street.

Numbers of people were there before me, all running in one direction, to the beach. I ran the same way, outstripping a good many, and soon came facing the wild sea.

The wind might by this time have lulled a little, though not more sensibly than if the cannonading I had dreamed of had been diminished by the silencing of half a dozen guns out of hundreds. But the sea, having upon it the additional agitation of the whole night, was infinitely more terrific than when I had seen it last. Every appearance it had then presented bore the expression of being *swelled;* and the height to which the breakers rose, and, looking over one another, bore one another down, and rolled in, in interminable hosts, was most appalling.

In the difficulty of hearing anything but wind and waves, and in the crowd, and the unspeakable confusion, and my first breathless efforts to stand against the weather, I was so confused that I looked out to sea for the wreck, and saw nothing but the foaming heads of the great waves. A half-dressed boatman, standing next me, pointed with his

bare arm (a tattooed arrow on it, pointing in the same direction) to the left. Then, oh great Heaven, I saw it close in upon us!

One mast was broken short off six or eight feet from the deck, and lay over the side entangled in a maze of sail and rigging; and all that ruin, as the ship rolled and beat—which she did without a moment's pause, and with a violence quite inconceivable—beat the side as if it would stave it in. Some efforts were even then being made to cut this portion of the wreck away; for as the ship, which was broadside on, turned toward us in her rolling, I plainly descried her people at work with axes, especially one active figure with long curling hair, conspicuous among the rest. But a great cry, which was audible even above the wind and water, rose from the shore at this moment; the sea, sweeping over the rolling wreck, made a clean breach, and carried men, spars, casks, planks, bulwarks, heaps of such toys, into the boiling surge.

The second mast was yet standing, with the rags of a rent sail, and a wild confusion of broken cordage flapping to and fro. The ship had struck once, the same boatman hoarsely said in my ear, and then lifted in and struck again. I understood him to add that she was parting amidships, and I could readily suppose so, for the rolling and beating were too tremendous for any human work to suffer long. As he spoke, there was another great cry of pity from the beach; four men arose with the wreck out of the deep clinging to the rigging of the remaining mast; uppermost, the active figure with the curling hair.

There was a bell on board; and as the ship rolled and dashed, like a desperate creature driven mad, now showing us the whole sweep of her deck as she turned on her beam-ends toward the shore, now nothing but her keel, as she sprung wildly over and turned toward the sea, the bell rang;

and its sound, the knell of those unhappy men, was borne toward us on the wind. Again we lost her, and again she rose. Two men were gone. The agony on shore increased. Men groaned and clasped their hands; women shrieked and turned away their faces. Some ran wildly up and down along the beach, crying for help where no help could be. I found myself one of these, frantically imploring a knot of sailors whom I knew, not to let those two lost creatures perish before our eyes.

They were making out to me, in an agitated way—I don't know how, for the little I could hear I was scarcely composed enough to understand—that the life-boat had been bravely manned an hour ago, and could do nothing; and that as no man would be so desperate as to attempt to wade off with a rope and establish a communication with the shore, there was nothing left to try; when I noticed that some new sensation moved the people on the beach, and saw them part, and Ham come breaking through them to the front.

I ran to him, as well as I know, to repeat my appeal for help. But, distracted though I was by a sight so new to me and terrible, the determination in his face, and his look out to sea—exactly the same look as I remembered in connection with the morning after Emily's flight—awoke me to a knowledge of his danger. I held him back with both arms; and implored the men with whom I had been speaking not to listen to him, not to do murder, not to let him stir from off that sand!

Another cry arose on shore; and looking to the wreck, we saw the cruel sail, with blow on blow, beat off the lower of the two men, and fly up in triumph round the active figure left alone upon the mast.

Against such a sight, and against such determination as that of the calmly desperate man who was already accus-

tomed to lead half the people present, I might as hopefully have entreated the wind. "Mas'r Davy," he said, cheerily, grasping me by both hands, "if my time is come, 'tis come. If't ain't, I'll bide it. Lord above bless you, and bless all! Mates, make me ready! I'm agoing off!"

I was swept away, but not unkindly, to some distance, where the people around me made me stay; urging, as I confusedly perceived, that he was bent on going, with help or without, and that I should endanger the precautions for his safety by troubling those with whom they rested. I don't know what I answered, or what they rejoined; but I saw hurry on the beach, and men running with ropes from a capstan that was there, and penetrating into a circle of figures that hid him from me. Then I saw him standing alone, in a seaman's frock and trousers; a rope in his hand, or slung to his wrist; another round his body; and several of the best men holding at a little distance to the latter, which he laid out himself, slack upon the shore, at his feet.

The wreck, even to my unpractised eye, was breaking up. I saw that she was parting in the middle, and that the life of the solitary man upon the mast hung by a thread. Still he clung to it. He had a singular red cap on—not like a sailor's cap, but of a finer color; and as the few yielding planks between him and destruction rolled and bulged, and his anticipative death-knell rung, he was seen by all of us to wave it. I saw him do it now, and thought I was going distracted, when his action brought an old remembrance to my mind of a once dear friend.

Ham watched the sea, standing alone, with the silence of suspended breath behind him, and the storm before, until there was a great retiring wave, when, with a backward glance at those who held the rope, which was made

fast round his body, he dashed in after it and in a moment was buffeting with the water; rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the foam; then drawn again to land. They hauled in hastily.

He was hurt. I saw blood on his face from where I stood; but he took no thought of that. He seemed hurriedly to give them some directions for leaving him more free—or so I judged from the motion of his arm—and was gone as before.

And now he made for the wreck, rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the rugged foam, borne in toward the shore, borne on toward the ship, striving hard and valiantly. The distance was nothing, but the power of the sea and wind made the strife deadly. At length he neared the wreck. He was so near that with one more of his vigorous strokes he would be clinging to it, when, a high, green, vast hillside of water moving on shoreward from beyond the ship, he seemed to leap up into it with a mighty bound, and the ship was gone!

Some eddying fragments I saw in the sea, as if a mere cask had been broken, in running to the spot where they were hauling in. Consternation was in every face. They drew him to my very feet—insensible—dead. He was carried to the nearest house; and, no one preventing me now, I remained near him, busy, while every means of restoration was tried; but he had been beaten to death by the great wave, and his generous heart was stilled forever.

As I sat beside the bed, when hope was abandoned and all was done, a fisherman who had known me when Emily and I were children, and ever since, whispered my name at the door.

"Sir," said he, with tears starting to his weather-beaten

face, which, with his trembling lips was ashy pale, "will you come over yonder?"

The old remembrance that had been recalled to me was in his look. I asked him, terror-stricken, leaning on the arm he held out to support me:

"Has a body come ashore?"

He said, "Yes."

"Do I know it?" I asked then.

He answered nothing.

But he led me to the shore. And on that part of it where she and I had looked for shells, two children—on that part of it where some lighter fragments of the old boat, blown down last night, had been scattered by the wind—among the ruins of the home he had wronged—I saw him lying with his head upon his arm, as I had often seen him lie at school.

No need, oh, Steerforth, to have said, when we last spoke together, in that hour which I so little deemed to be our parting hour—no need to have said, "Think of me at my best!" I had done that ever; and could I change now, looking on this sight!

They brought a hand-bier and laid him on it and covered him with a flag and took him up and bore him on toward the houses. All the men who carried him had known him, and gone sailing with him, and seen him merry and bold. They carried him through the wild roar, a hush in the midst of all the tumult, and took him to the cottage where Death was already.

But when they set the bier down on the threshold they looked at one another and at me, and whispered. I knew why. They felt as if it were not right to lay him down in the same quiet room.

## Clare's Diary[1]

*George Meredith* (1828–1909)

[Clare Doria Forey is Richard Feverel's cousin; they were brought up at Raynham Abbey together, and she, unknown to him, has been in love with him all her life. Richard has made a runaway match with a farmer's daughter. Clare, having lost her grip on life now that she can never have Richard for a husband, has allowed her ambitious mother to force her into a marriage with a rich old man, for whom she has no affection. Richard, ignorant of her despair and that he is the cause of it, has supposed her marriage voluntary on her part and prompted by greed of money, consequently he has avoided her and treated her with contempt. Her heart breaks under his despising, and she dies. He discovers her secret love for him too late.]

Clare lies in her bed as placid as in the days when she breathed; her white hands stretched their length along the sheets, at peace from head to feet. She needs iron no more. Richard is face to face with death for the first time. He sees the sculpture of clay—the spark gone.

Clare gave her mother the welcome of the dead. This child would have spoken nothing but kind commonplaces had she been alive. She was dead, and none knew her malady. On her fourth finger were two wedding-rings.

When hours of weeping had silenced the mother's anguish, she, for some comfort she saw in it, pointed out that strange thing to Richard, speaking low in the chamber of the dead; and then he learned that it was his own lost ring Clare wore in the two worlds. He learned from her husband that Clare's last request had been that neither

[1] From *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel.*

of the rings should be removed. She had written it; she would not speak it.

"I beg of my husband, and all kind people who may have the care of me between this and the grave, to bury me with my hands untouched."

The tracing of the words showed the bodily torment she was suffering, as she wrote them on a scrap of paper found beside her pillow.

In wonder, as the dim idea grew from the waving of Clare's dead hand, Richard paced the house, and hung about the awful room; dreading to enter it, reluctant to quit it. The secret Clare had buried while she lived arose with her death. He saw it play like flame across her marble features. The memory of her voice was like a knife at his nerves. His coldness to her started up accusingly; her meekness was bitter blame.

On the evening of the fourth day her mother came to him in his bedroom, with a face so white that he asked himself if aught worse could happen to a mother than the loss of her child. Choking, she said to him, "Read this," and thrust a leather-bound pocket-book trembling in his hand. She would not breathe to him what it was. She entreated him not to open it before her.

"Tell me," she said—"tell me what you think. John must not hear of it. I have nobody to consult but you—O Richard!"

"My Diary" was written in the round hand of Clare's childhood on the first page. The first name his eye encountered was his own.

"Richard's fourteenth birthday. I have worked him a purse and put it under his pillow, because he is going to have plenty of money. He does not notice me now because he has a friend now, and he is ugly, but Richard is not, and never will be."

The occurrences of that day were subsequently recorded, and a childish prayer to God for him set down. Step by step he saw her growing mind in his history. As she advanced in years she began to look back and made much of little trivial remembrances, all bearing upon him.

"We went into the fields and gathered cowslips together, and pelted each other, and I told him he used to call them 'coal-sleeps' when he was a baby, and he was angry at my telling him, for he does not like to be told he was ever a baby."

He remembered the incident, and remembered his stupid scorn of her meek affection. Little Clare! how she lived before him in her white dress and pink ribbons, and soft, dark eyes! Up-stairs she was lying dead. He read on:

"Mama says there is no one in the world like Richard, and I am sure there is not, not in the whole world. He says he is going to be a great General and going to the wars. If he does I shall dress myself as a boy and go after him, and he will not know me till I am wounded. Oh, I pray he will never, never be wounded! I wonder what I should feel if Richard was ever to die."

Up-stairs Clare was lying dead.

"Lady Blandish said there was a likeness between Richard and me. Richard said I hope I do not hang down my head as she does. He is angry with me because I do not look people in the face and speak out, but I know I am not looking after earthworms."

Yes. He had told her that. A shiver seized him at the recollection.

Then it came to a period when the words, "Richard kissed me," stood by themselves and marked a day in her life.

Afterward it was solemnly discovered that Richard

wrote poetry. He read one of his old forgotten compositions penned when he had that ambition.

"Thy truth to me is truer
Than horse, or dog, or blade;
Thy vows to me are fewer
Than ever maiden made.

"Thou steppest from thy splendour
To make my life a song:
My bosom shall be tender
As thine has risen strong."

All the verses were transcribed. "It is he who is the humble knight," Clare explained at the close, "and his lady is a Queen. Any Queen would throw her crown away for him."

It came to that period when Clare left Raynham with her mother.

"Richard was not sorry to lose me. He only loves boys and men. Something tells me I shall never see Raynham again. He was dressed in blue. He said good-bye, Clare, and kissed me on the cheek. Richard never kisses me on the mouth. He did not know I went to his bed and kissed him while he was asleep. He sleeps with one arm under his head, and the other out on the bed. I moved away a bit of his hair that was over his eyes. I wanted to cut it. I have one piece. I do not let anybody see I am unhappy, not even mama. She says I want iron. I am sure I do not. I like to write my name. Clare Doria Forey. Richard's is Richard Doria Feverel."

His breast rose convulsively. Clare Doria Forey! He knew the music of that name. He had heard it somewhere. It sounded faint and mellow now behind the hills of death.

He could not read for tears. It was midnight. The hour

seemed to belong to her. The awful stillness and the darkness were Clare's. Clare's voice clear and cold from the grave possessed it.

Painfully, with blinded eyes, he looked over the breathless pages. She spoke of his marriage and her finding the ring.

"I knew it was his. I knew he was going to be married that morning. I saw him stand by the altar when they laughed at breakfast. His wife must be so beautiful! Richard's wife! Perhaps he will love me better now he is married. Mama says they must be separated. That is shameful. If I can help him I will. I pray so that he may be happy. I hope God hears poor sinners' prayers. I am very sinful. Nobody knows it as I do. They say I am good, but I know. When I look on the ground I am not looking after earthworms, as he said. Oh, do forgive me, God!"

Then she spoke of her own marriage, and that it was her duty to obey her mother. A blank in the Diary ensued.

"I have seen Richard. Richard despises me," was the next entry.

But now as he read his eyes were fixed, and the delicate feminine handwriting like a black thread drew on his soul to one terrible conclusion.

"I cannot live. Richard despises me. I cannot bear the touch of my fingers or the sight of my face. Oh! I understand him now. He should not have kissed me so that last time. I wished to die while his mouth was on mine."

Further: "I have no escape. Richard said he would die rather than endure it. I know he would. Why should I be afraid to do what he would do? I think if my husband whipped me I could bear it better. He is so kind, and tries to make me cheerful. He will soon be very un-

happy. I pray to God half the night. I seem to be losing sight of my God the more I pray."

Richard laid the book open on the table. Phantom surges seemed to be mounting and travelling through his brain. Had Clare taken his wild words in earnest? Did she lie there dead—he shrouded the thought.

He wrapped the thoughts in shrouds, but he was again reading.

"A quarter to one o'clock. I shall not be alive this time to-morrow. I shall never see Richard now. I dreamed last night we were in the fields together, and he walked with his arm round my waist. We were children, but I thought we were married, and I showed him I wore his ring, and he said—if you always wear it, Clare, you are as good as my wife. Then I made a vow to wear it forever and ever. . . . It is not mama's fault. She does not think as Richard and I do of these things. He is not a coward, nor am I. He hates cowards.

"I have written to his father to make him happy. Perhaps when I am dead he will hear what I say.

"I heard just now Richard call distinctly—Clari, come out to me. Surely he has not gone. I am going I know not where. I cannot think. I am very cold."

The words were written larger, and staggered toward the close, as if her hand had lost mastery over the pen.

"I can only remember Richard now a boy. A little boy and a big boy. I am not sure now of his voice. I can only remember certain words, 'Clari,' and 'Don Ricardo,' and his laugh. He used to be full of fun. Once we laughed all day together tumbling in the hay. Then he had a friend, and began to write poetry, and be proud. If I had married a young man he would have forgiven me, but I should not have been happier. I must have died. God never looks on me.

"It is past two o'clock. The sheep are bleating outside. It must be very cold in the ground. Good-bye, Richard."

With his name it began and ended. Even to herself Clare was not over-communicative. The book was slender, yet her nineteen years of existence left half the number of pages white.

Those last words drew him irresistibly to gaze on her. There she lay, the same impassive Clare. For a moment he wondered she had not moved —to him she had become so different. She who had just filled his ears with strange tidings—it was not possible to think her dead! She seemed to have been speaking to him all through his life. His image was on that still heart.

He dismissed the night-watchers from the room, and remained with her alone, till the sense of death oppressed him, and then the shock sent him to the window to look for sky and stars. Behind a low broad pine, hung with frosty mist, he heard a bell-wether of the flock in the silent fold. Death in life it sounded.

## The Last of Svengali[1]

*George Du Maurier* (1834–1896)

[Trilby started life as an artist's model in Paris. There she became a friend of *les trois Angliches*, Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee. Little Billee fell in love with her, but she would not marry him for fear of ruining his career. Just after her separation from him, at a time when she was heartbroken, Svengali had come to her. She had no ear for music, and her tuneless singing was one of her jokes, but Svengali had recognized the splendid qualities of her voice. He took possession of her, carried her out of Paris, and trained her to sing under

[1] From *Trilby*. Copyright, 1894, by Harper & Brothers.

hypnotism. All her actions since he has come into her life have been performed under his hypnotic control. Of this fact every one save Svengali, his pupil Gecko, and his relative Marta, is ignorant. Meanwhile *les trois Angliches* have been wondering what has become of her. She next appears on their horizon as la Svengali, the greatest voice in Europe.]

La Svengali has arrived in London. Her name is in every mouth. Her photograph is in the shop-windows. She is to sing at J——'s monster concerts next week. She was to have sung sooner, but it seems some hitch has occurred—a quarrel between Monsieur Svengali and his first violin, who is a very important person.

A crowd of people as usual, only bigger, is assembled in front of the windows of the Stereoscopic Company in Regent Street, gazing at presentments of Madame Svengali in all sizes and costumes. She is very beautiful—there is no doubt of that; and the expression of her face is sweet and kind and sad, and of such a distinction that one feels an imperial crown would become her even better than her modest little coronet of golden stars. One of the photographs represents her in classical dress, with her left foot on a little stool, in something of the attitude of the Venus of Milo, except that her hands are clasped behind her back; and the foot is bare but for a Greek sandal, and so smooth and delicate and charming, and with so rhythmical a set and curl of the five slender toes (the big one slightly tip-tilted and well apart from its longer and slighter and more aquiline neighbor), that this presentment of her sells quicker than all the rest.

And a little man who, with two bigger men, has just forced his way in front says to one of his friends: "Look, Sandy, look—*the foot! Now* have you got any doubts?"

"Oh yes—those are Trilby's toes, sure enough!" says Sandy. And they all go in and purchase largely.

As far as I have been able to discover, the row between Svengali and his first violin had occurred at a rehearsal in Drury Lane Theatre.

Svengali, it seems, had never been quite the same since the 15th of October previous, and that was the day he had got his face slapped and his nose tweaked by Taffy in Paris. He had become short-tempered and irritable, especially with his wife (if she *was* his wife). Svengali, it seems, had reasons for passionately hating Little Billee.

He had not seen him for five years—not since the Christmas festivity in the Place St. Anatole, when they had sparred together after supper, and Svengali's nose had got in the way on this occasion, and had been made to bleed; but that was not why he hated Little Billee.

When he caught sight of him standing on the curb in the Place de la Concorde and watching the procession of "tout Paris," he knew him directly, and all his hate flared up; he cut him dead, and made his wife do the same.

Next morning he saw him again in the hotel post-office, looking small and weak and flurried, and apparently alone; and being an Oriental Israelite Hebrew Jew, he had not been able to resist the temptation of spitting in his face, since he must not throttle him to death.

The minute he had done this he had regretted the folly of it. Little Billee had run after him, and kicked and struck him, and he had returned the blow and drawn blood; and then, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, had come upon the scene that apparition so loathed and dreaded of old—the pig-headed Yorkshireman—the huge British philistine, the irresponsible bull, the junker, the ex-Crimean, Front-de-Bœuf, who had always reminded him of the brutal and contemptuous sword-clanking, spur-jingling aristocrats of his own country—ruffians that treated Jews like dogs. Callous as he was to the woes of others, the self-indulgent

and highly strung musician was extra sensitive about himself —a very bundle of nerves—and especially sensitive to pain and rough usage, and by no means physically brave. The stern, choleric, invincible blue eye of the hated Northern gentile had cowed him at once. And that violent tweaking of his nose, that heavy, open-handed blow on his face, had so shaken and demoralized him that he had never recovered from it.

He was thinking about it always—night and day—and constantly dreaming at night that he was being tweaked and slapped over again by a colossal nightmare Taffy, and waking up in agonies of terror, rage, and shame. All healthy sleep had forsaken him.

Moreover, he was much older than he looked—nearly fifty—and far from sound. His life had been a long, hard struggle.

He had for his wife, slave, and pupil a fierce, jealous kind of affection that was a source of endless torment to him; for indelibly graven in her heart, which he wished to occupy alone, was the never-fading image of the little English painter, and of this she made no secret.

Gecko no longer cared for the master. All Gecko's dog-like devotion was concentrated on the slave and pupil, whom he worshipped with a fierce but pure and unselfish passion. The only living soul that Svengali could trust was the old Jewess who lived with them—his relative—but even she had come to love the pupil as much as the master.

On the occasion of this rehearsal at Drury Lane he (Svengali) was conducting and Madame Svengali was singing. He interrupted her several times, angrily and most unjustly, and told her she was singing out of tune, "like a verfluchter tomcat," which was quite untrue. She was singing beautifully, "Home, Sweet Home."

Finally he struck her two or three smart blows on her knuckles with his little bâton, and she fell on her knees, weeping and crying out:

"Oh! oh! Svengali! ne me battez pas, mon ami—je fais tout ce que je peux!"

On which little Gecko had suddenly jumped up and struck Svengali on the neck near the collar-bone, and then it was seen that he had a little bloody knife in his hand, and blood flowed from Svengali's neck, and at the sight of it Svengali had fainted; and Madame Svengali had taken his head on her lap, looking dazed and stupefied, as in a waking dream.

Gecko had been disarmed, but as Svengali recovered from his faint and was taken home, the police had not been sent for, and the affair was hushed up, and a public scandal avoided. But la Svengali's first appearance, to Monsieur J——'s despair, had to be put off for a week. For Svengali would not allow her to sing without him; nor, indeed, would he be parted from her for a minute, or trust her out of his sight.

The wound was a slight one. The doctor who attended Svengali described the wife as being quite imbecile, no doubt from grief and anxiety. But she never left her husband's bedside for a moment, and had the obedience and devotion of a dog.

When the night came round for the postponed début, Svengali was allowed by the doctor to go to the theatre, but he was absolutely forbidden to conduct. His grief and anxiety at this were uncontrollable; he raved like a madman; and Monsieur J—— was almost as bad.

Monsieur J—— had been conducting the Svengali band at rehearsals during the week, in the absence of its master —an easy task. It had been so thoroughly drilled and knew its business so well that it could almost conduct it-

self, and it had played all the music it had to play (much of which consisted of accompaniments to la Svengali's songs) many times before. Her répertoire was immense, and Svengali had written these orchestral scores with great care and felicity.

On the famous night it was arranged that Svengali should sit in a box alone, exactly opposite his wife's place on the platform, where she could see him well; and a code of simple signals was arranged between him and Monsieur J—— and the band, so that virtually he might conduct, himself, from his box should any hesitation or hitch occur. This arrangement was rehearsed the day before (a Sunday) and had turned out quite successfully, and la Svengali had sung in perfection in the empty theatre.

When Monday evening arrived everything seemed to be going smoothly; the house was soon crammed to suffocation, all but the middle box on the grand tier. It was not a promenade concert, and the pit was turned into guinea stalls (the promenade concerts were to be given a week later).

Right in the middle of these stalls sat the Laird and Taffy and Little Billee.

The band came in by degrees and tuned their instruments.

Eyes were constantly being turned to the empty box, and people wondered what royal personages would appear.

Monsieur J—— took his place amid immense applause, and bowed in his inimitable way, looking often at the empty box.

Then he tapped and waved his bâton, and the band played its Hungarian dance music with immense success; when this was over there was a pause, and soon some signs of impatience from the gallery. Monsieur J—— had disappeared.

Taffy stood up, his back to the orchestra, looking round.

Some one came into the empty box, and stood for a moment in front, gazing at the house. A tall man, deathly pale, with long, black hair and a beard.

It was Svengali.

He caught sight of Taffy and met his eyes, and Taffy said: "Good God! Look! look!"

Then Little Billee and the Laird got up and looked.

And Svengali for a moment glared at them. And the expression of his face was so terrible with wonder, rage, and fear that they were quite appalled—and then he sat down, still glaring at Taffy, the whites of his eyes showing at the top, and his teeth bared in a spasmodic grin of hate.

Then thunders of applause filled the house, and turning round and seating themselves, Taffy and Little Billee and the Laird saw Trilby being led by J—— down the platform, between the players, to the front, her face smiling rather vacantly, her eyes anxiously intent on Svengali in his box.

She made her bows to right and left just as she had done in Paris.

The band struck up the opening bars of "Ben Bolt," with which she was announced to make her début.

She still stared—but she didn't sing—and they played the little symphony three times.

One could hear Monsieur J—— in a hoarse, anxious whisper saying:

"Mais chantez donc, madame—pour l'amour de Dieu, commencez donc—commencez!"

She turned round with an extraordinary expression of face, and said:

"Chanter? pourquoi donc voulez-vous que je chante, moi? chanter quoi, alors?"

"Mais 'Ben Bolt,' parbleu—chantez!"

"Ah—'Ben Bolt!' oui—je connais ça!"

Then the band began again.

And she tried, but failed to begin herself. She turned round and said:

"Comment diable voulez-vous que je chante avec tout ce train qu'ils font, ces diables de musiciens!"

"Mais, mon Dieu, madame—qu'est-ce que vous avez donc?" cried Monsieur J——.

"J'ai que j'aime mieux chanter sans toute cette satanée musique, parbleu! J'aime mieux chanter toute seule!"

"Sans musique, alors—mais chantez—chantez!"

The band was stopped—the house was in a state of indescribable wonder and suspense.

She looked all round, and down at herself, and fingered her dress. Then she looked up to the chandelier with a tender, sentimental smile, and began:

"Oh, don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt?
Sweet Alice with hair so brown,
Who wept with delight when you gave her a smile—"

She had not got farther than this when the whole house was in an uproar—shouts from the gallery—shouts of laughter, hoots, hisses, catcalls, cock-crows.

She stopped and glared like a brave lioness and called out:

"Qu'est-ce que vous avez donc, tous! tas de vieilles pommes cuites que vous êtes! Est-ce qu'on a peur de vous?" and then, suddenly:

"Why, you're all English, aren't you?—what's all the row about? What have you brought me here for? What have *I* done, I should like to know?"

And in asking these questions the depth and splendor of her voice were so extraordinary—its tone so pathetically feminine, yet so full of hurt and indignant command, that the tumult was stilled for a moment.

It was the voice of some being from another world—some insulted daughter of a race more puissant and nobler than ours; a voice that seemed as if it could never utter a false note.

Then came a voice from the gods in answer:

"Oh, ye're Henglish, har yer? Why don't yer sing as yer *hought* to sing—yer've got *voice* enough, any'ow! why don't yer sing in *tune?*"

"Sing in *tune!*" cried Trilby. "I didn't want to sing at all—I only sang because I was asked to sing—that gentleman asked me—that French gentleman with the white waistcoat! I won't sing another note!"

"Oh, yer won't, won't yer! then let us 'ave our money back, or we'll know what for!"

And again the din broke out, and the uproar was frightful.

Monsieur J—— screamed out across the theatre: "Svengali! Svengali! qu'est-ce qu'elle a donc, votre femme? . . . Elle est devenue folle!"

Indeed she had tried to sing "Ben Bolt," but had sung it in her old way—as she used to sing it in the Quartier Latin—the most lamentably grotesque performance ever heard out of a human throat!

"Svengali! Svengali!" shrieked poor Monsieur J——, gesticulating toward the box where Svengali was sitting, quite impassible, gazing at Monsieur J ——, and smiling a ghastly, sardonic smile, a rictus of hate and triumphant revenge—as if he were saying:

"I've got the laugh of you *all*, this time!"

Taffy, the Laird, Little Billee, the whole house, were now staring at Svengali, and his wife was forgotten.

She stood vacantly looking at everybody and everything—the chandelier, Monsieur J——, Svengali in his box, the people in the stalls, in the gallery—and smiling as if the noisy scene amused and excited her.

"Svengali! Svengali! Svengali!"

The whole house took up the cry derisively. Monsieur J—— led Madame Svengali away; she seemed quite passive. That terrible figure of Svengali still sat, immovable, watching his wife's retreat—still smiling his ghastly smile. All eyes were now turned on him once more.

Monsieur J—— was then seen to enter his box with a policeman and two or three other men, one of them in evening dress. He quickly drew the curtains to; then, a minute or two after, he reappeared on the platform, bowing and scraping to the audience, as pale as death, and called for silence, the gentleman in evening dress by his side; and this person explained that a very dreadful thing had happened—that Monsieur Svengali had suddenly died in that box—of apoplexy or heart-disease; that his wife had seen it from her place on the stage, and had apparently gone out of her senses, which accounted for her extraordinary behavior.

He added that the money would be returned at the doors, and begged the audience to disperse quietly.

Taffy, with his two friends behind him, forced his way to a stage door he knew. The Laird had no longer any doubts on the score of Trilby's identity—*this* Trilby, at all events!

Taffy knocked and thumped till the door was opened, and gave his card to the man who opened it, stating that he and his friends were old friends of Madame Svengali, and must see her at once.

The man tried to slam the door in his face, but Taffy pushed through, and shut it on the crowd outside, and

insisted on being taken to Monsieur J—— immediately; and was so authoritative and big, and looked such a swell, that the man was cowed, and led him.

They passed an open door, through which they had a glimpse of a prostrate form on a table—a man partially undressed, and some men bending over him, doctors probably.

That was the last they saw of Svengali.

Then they were taken to another door, and Monsieur J—— came out, and Taffy explained who they were, and they were admitted.

La Svengali was there, sitting in an arm-chair by the fire, with several of the band standing round gesticulating, and talking German or Polish or Yiddish. Gecko, on his knees, was alternately chafing her hands and feet. She seemed quite dazed.

But at the sight of Taffy she jumped up and rushed at him, saying: "Oh, Taffy dear—oh, Taffy! what's it all about? Where on earth am I? What an age since we met?"

Then she caught sight of the Laird, and kissed him; and then she recognized Little Billee.

She looked at him for a long while in great surprise, and then shook hands with him.

"How pale you are! and so changed—you've got a mustache! What's the matter? Why are you all dressed in black, with white cravats, as if you were going to a ball? Where's Svengali? I should like to go home!"

"Where—what do you call—home, I mean—where is it?" asked Taffy.

"C'est à l'hôtel de Normandie, dans le Haymarket. On va vous y conduire, madame!" said Monsieur J——.

"Oui—c'est ça!" said Trilby—"Hôtel de Normandie—mais Svengali—où est-ce qu'il est?"

"Hélas! madame—il est très malade!"

"Malade? Qu'est-ce qu'il a? How funny you look, with your mustache, Little Billee! dear, *dear* Little Billee! so pale, so very pale! Are you ill too? Oh, I hope not! How *glad* I am to see you again—you can't tell! though I promised your mother I wouldn't—never, never! Where are we now, dear Little Billee?"

Monsieur J—— seemed to have lost his head. He was constantly running in and out of the room, distracted. The bandsmen began to talk and try to explain in incomprehensible French, to Taffy. Gecko seemed to have disappeared. It was a bewildering business—noises from outside, the tramp and bustle and shouts of the departing crowd, people running in and out and asking for Monsieur J——, policemen, firemen, and what not!

Then Little Billee, who had been exerting the most heroic self-control, suggested that Trilby should come to his house in Fitzroy Square, first of all, and be taken out of all this—and the idea struck Taffy as a happy one—and it was proposed to Monsieur J——, who saw that our three friends were old friends of Madame Svengali's, and people to be trusted; and he was only too glad to be relieved of her, and gave his consent.

Little Billee and Taffy drove to Fitzroy Square to prepare Little Billee's landlady, who was much put out at first at having such a novel and unexpected charge imposed on her. It was all explained to her that it must be so. That Madame Svengali, the greatest singer in Europe and an old friend of her tenant's, had suddenly gone out of her mind from grief at the tragic death of her husband, and that for this night at least the unhappy lady must sleep under that roof.

So much for la Svengali's début in London.

## A Woman's Way[1]

*Thomas Hardy* (1840)

[Elfride's old lover is returning from India; she has gone down to the cliff overlooking the sea, armed with a telescope to watch for his steamer passing by. On the way she is met by her more recent lover, Knight, who is unaware of her purpose. His hat is swept from off his head by the wind; in attempting to regain it he slips over the precipice, clutches at a knot of starved herbage, and hangs suspended between sea and sky. No help is within reach, and no rope or pole by which he may be saved. Elfride, having gazed upon him desperately, has withdrawn from the cliff-brow and disappeared from sight. While this is happening, the steamer bearing homeward her first lover is passing by.]

He still clutched the face of the escarpment—not with the frenzied hold of despair, but with a dogged determination to make the most of his every jot of endurance, and so give the longest possible scope to Elfride's intentions, whatever they might be.

He reclined hand in hand with the world in its infancy. Not a blade, not an insect, which spoke of the present, was between him and the past. The inveterate antagonism of these black precipices to all strugglers for life is in no way more forcibly suggested than by the paucity of tufts of grass, lichens, or confervæ on their outermost ledges.

Knight pondered on the meaning of Elfride's hasty disappearance, but could not avoid an instinctive conclusion that there existed but a doubtful hope for him. As far as he could judge, his sole chance of deliverance lay in the

[1] From *A Pair of Blue Eyes.*

possibility of a rope or pole being brought; and this possibility was remote indeed. The soil upon these high downs was left so untended that they were unenclosed for miles, except by a casual bank or dry wall, and were rarely visited but for the purpose of collecting or counting the flock which found a scanty means of subsistence thereon.

At first, when death appeared improbable, because it had never visited him before, Knight could think of no future, nor of anything connected with his past. He could only look sternly at Nature's treacherous attempt to put an end to him, and strive to thwart her.

From the fact that the cliff formed the inner face of the segment of a huge cylinder, having the sky for a top and the sea for a bottom, which enclosed the cove to the extent of more than a semicircle, he could see the vertical face curving round on each side of him. He looked far down the façade, and realized more thoroughly how it threatened him. Grimness was in every feature, and to its very bowels the inimical shape was desolation.

By one of those familiar conjunctions of things wherewith the inanimate world baits the mind of man when he pauses in moments of suspense, opposite Knight's eyes was an imbedded fossil, standing forth in low relief from the rock. It was a creature with eyes. The eyes, dead and turned to stone, were even now regarding him. It was one of the early crustaceans called Trilobites. Separated by millions of years in their lives, Knight and this underling seemed to have met in their death. It was the single instance within reach of his vision of anything that had ever been alive and had had a body to save, as he himself had now.

The creature represented but a low type of animal existence, for never in their vernal years had the plains indicated by those numberless slaty layers been traversed

by an intelligence worthy of the name. Zoophytes, molluscs, shell-fish, were the highest developments of those ancient dates. The immense lapses of time each formation represented had known nothing of the dignity of man. They were grand times, but they were mean times too, and mean were their relics. He was to be with the small in his death.

Knight was a geologist; and such is the supremacy of habit over occasion, as a pioneer of the thoughts of men, that at this dreadful juncture his mind found time to take in, by a momentary sweep, the varied scenes that had had their day between this creature's epoch and his own. There is no place like a cleft landscape for bringing home such imaginings as these.

Time closed up like a fan before him. He saw himself at one extremity of the years, face to face with the beginning and all the intermediate centuries simultaneously. Fierce men, clothed in the hides of beasts, and carrying, for defence and attack, huge clubs and pointed spears, rose from the rock, like the phantoms before the doomed Macbeth. They lived in hollows, woods, and mud huts—perhaps in caves of the neighbouring rocks. Behind them stood an earlier band. No man was there. Huge elephantine forms, the mastodon, the hippopotamus, the tapir, antelopes of monstrous size, the megatherium, and the myledon—all, for the moment, in juxtaposition. Farther back, and overlapped by these, were perched huge-billed birds and swinish creatures as large as horses. Still more shadowy were the sinister crocodilian outlines—alligators and other uncouth shapes, culminating in the colossal lizard, the iguanodon. Folded behind were dragon forms and clouds of flying reptiles; still underneath were fishy beings of lower development; and so on, till the lifetime scenes of the fossil confronting him were

a present and modern condition of things. These images passed before Knight's inner eye in less than half a minute, and he was again considering the actual present. Was he to die? The mental picture of Elfride in the world, without himself to cherish her, smote his heart like a whip. He had hoped for deliverance, but what could a girl do? He dared not move an inch. Was Death really stretching out his hand? The previous sensation, that it was improbable he would die, was fainter now.

However, Knight still clung to the cliff.

To those musing weather-beaten West-country folk who pass the greater part of their days and nights out-of-doors, Nature seems to have moods in other than a poetical sense; predilections for certain deeds at certain times, without any apparent law to govern or season to account for them. She is read as a person with a curious temper; as one who does not scatter kindnesses and cruelties alternately, impartially, and in order, but heartless severities or overwhelming generosities in lawless caprice. Man's case is always that of the prodigal's favourite or the miser's pensioner. In her unfriendly moments there seems a feline fun in her tricks, begotten by a foretaste of her pleasure in swallowing the victim.

Such a way of thinking had been absurd to Knight, but he began to adopt it now. He was first spitted on to a rock. New tortures followed. The rain increased, and persecuted him with an exceptional persistency which he was moved to believe owed its cause to the fact that he was in such a wretched state already. An entirely new order of things could be observed in this introduction of rain upon the scene. It rained upward instead of down. The strong ascending air carried the rain-drops with it in its race up the escarpment, coming to him with such velocity that they stuck into his flesh like cold needles.

Each drop was virtually a shaft, and it pierced him to his skin. The water-shafts seemed to lift him on their points; no downward rain ever had such a torturing effect. In a brief space he was drenched, except in two places. These were on the top of his shoulders and on the crown of his hat.

The wind, though not intense in other situations, was strong here. It tugged at his coat and lifted it. We are mostly accustomed to look upon all opposition which is not animate, as that of the stolid, inexorable hand of indifference, which wears out the patience more than the strength. Here, at any rate, hostility did not assume that slow and sickening form. It was a cosmic agency, active, lashing, eager for conquest: determination; not an insensate standing in the way.

Knight had overestimated the strength of his hands. They were getting weak already. "She will never come again; she has been gone ten minutes," he said, to himself.

This mistake arose from the unusual compression of his experiences just now; she had really been gone but three.

"As many more minutes will be my end," he thought.

Next came another instance of the incapacity of the mind to make comparisons at such times.

"This is a summer afternoon," he said, "and there can never have been such a heavy and cold rain on a summer day in my life before."

He was again mistaken. The rain was quite ordinary in quantity; the air in temperature. It was, as is usual, the menacing attitude in which they approached him that magnified their powers.

He again looked straight downward, the wind and the water-dashes lifting his mustache, scudding up his cheeks, under his eyelids, and into his eyes. This is what he saw down there: the surface of the sea—visually just past

his toes, and under his feet; actually one-eighth of a mile, or more than two hundred yards, below them. We colour according to our moods the objects we survey. The sea would have been a deep neutral blue, had happier auspices attended the gazer; it was now no otherwise than distinctly black to his vision. That narrow white border was foam, he knew well; but its boisterous tosses were so distant as to appear a pulsation only, and its plashing was barely audible. A white border to a black sea—his funeral pall and its edging.

The world was to some extent turned upside down for him. Rain descended from below. Beneath his feet was aerial space and the unknown; above him was the firm, familiar ground, and upon it all that he loved best.

Pitiless nature then had two voices, and two only. The nearer was the voice of the wind in his ears rising and falling as it mauled and thrust him hard or softly. The second and distant one was the moan of that unplummetted ocean below and afar—rubbing its restless flank against the Cliff without a Name.

Knight perseveringly held fast. Had he any faith in Elfride? Perhaps. Love is faith, and faith, like a gathered flower, will rootlessly live on.

Nobody would have expected the sun to shine on such an evening as this. Yet it appeared, low down upon the sea. Not with its natural golden fringe, sweeping the farthest ends of the landscape, not with the strange glare of whiteness which it sometimes puts on as an alternative to colour, but as a splotch of vermilion red upon a leaden ground—a red face looking on with a drunken leer.

Most men who have brains know it, and few are so foolish as to disguise this fact from themselves or others, even though an ostentatious display may be called self-conceit. Knight, without showing it much, knew that his intellect

was above the average. And he thought—he could not help thinking—that his death would be a deliberate loss to earth of good material; that such an experiment in killing might have been practised upon some less developed life.

A fancy some people hold, when in a bitter mood, is that inexorable circumstance only tries to prevent what intelligence attempts. Renounce a desire for a long-contested position, and go on another tack, and after a while the prize is thrown at you, seemingly in disappointment that no more tantalizing is possible.

Knight gave up thoughts of life utterly and entirely, and turned to contemplate the Dark Valley and the unknown future beyond. Into the shadowy depths of these speculations we will not follow him. Let it suffice to state what ensued.

At that moment of taking no more thought for this life, something disturbed the outline of the bank above him. A spot appeared. It was the head of Elfride.

Knight immediately prepared to welcome life again.

The expression of a face consigned to utter loneliness, when a friend first looks in upon it, is moving in the extreme. In rowing seaward to a light-ship or sea-girt lighthouse, where, without any immediate terror of death, the inmates experience the gloom of monotonous seclusion, the grateful eloquence of their countenances at the greeting, expressive of thankfulness for the visit, is enough to stir the emotions of the most careless observer.

Knight's upward look at Elfride was of a nature with, but far transcending, such an instance as this. The lines of his face had deepened to furrows, and every one of them thanked her visibly. His lips moved to the word "Elfride," though the emotion evolved no sound. His eyes passed all description in their combination of the whole diapason

of eloquence, from lover's deep love to fellow-man's gratitude for a token of remembrance from one of his kind.

Elfride had come back. What she had come to do he did not know. She could only look on at his death, perhaps. Still, she had come back, and not deserted him utterly, and it was much.

It was a novelty in the extreme to see Henry Knight, to whom Elfride was but a child, who had swayed her as a tree sways a bird's nest, who mastered her and made her weep most bitterly at her own insignificance, thus thankful for a sight of her face. She looked down upon him, her face glistening with rain and tears. He smiled faintly.

"How calm he is!" she thought. "How great and noble he is to be so calm!" She would have died ten times for him then.

The gliding form of the steamboat caught her eye; she heeded it no longer.

"How much longer can you wait?" came from her pale lips and along the wind to his position.

"Four minutes," said Knight, in a weaker voice than her own.

"But with a good hope of being saved?"

"Seven or eight."

He now noticed that in her arms she bore a bundle of white linen, and that her form was singularly attenuated. So preternaturally thin and flexible was Elfride at this moment, that she appeared to bend under the light blows of the rain-shafts, as they struck into her sides and bosom and splintered into spray on her face. There is nothing like a thorough drenching for reducing the protuberances of clothes, but Elfride's seemed to cling to her like a glove.

Without heeding the attack of the clouds further than by raising her hand and wiping away the spirts of rain

when they went more particularly into her eyes, she sat down and hurriedly began rending the linen into strips. These she knotted end to end, and afterward twisted them like the strands of a cord. In a short space of time she had formed a perfect rope by this means, six or seven yards long.

"Can you wait while I bind it?" she said, anxiously extending her gaze down to him.

"Yes, if not very long. Hope has given me a wonderful instalment of strength."

Elfride dropped her eyes again, tore the remaining material into narrow tape-like ligaments, knotted each to each as before, but on a smaller scale, and wound the lengthy string she had thus formed round and round the linen rope, which, without this binding, had a tendency to spread abroad.

"Now," said Knight, who, watching the proceedings intently, had by this time not only grasped her scheme, but reasoned further on, "I can hold three minutes longer yet. And do you use the time in testing the strength of the knots, one by one."

She at once obeyed, tested each singly by putting her foot on the rope between each knot, and pulling with her hands. One of the knots slipped.

"Oh, think! It would have broken but for your forethought." Elfride exclaimed, apprehensively.

She retied the two ends. The rope was now firm in every part.

"When you have let it down," said Knight, already resuming his position of ruling power, "go back from the edge of the slope, and over the bank as far as the rope will allow you. Then lean down and hold the end with both hands."

He had first thought of a safer plan for his own deliver-

ance, but it involved the disadvantage of possibly endangering her life.

"I have tied it round my waist," she cried, "and I will lean directly upon the bank, holding with my hands as well."

It was the arrangement he had thought of, but would not suggest.

"I will raise and drop it three times when I am behind the bank," she continued, "to signify that I am ready. Take care, oh, take the greatest care, I beg you!"

She dropped the rope over him, to learn how much of its length it would be necessary to expend on that side of the bank, went back, and disappeared as she had done before.

The rope was trailing by Knight's shoulders. In a few moments it twitched three times.

He waited yet a second or two, then laid hold.

The incline of this upper portion of the precipice to the length only of a few feet, useless to a climber empty-handed, was invaluable now. Not more than half his weight depended entirely on the linen rope. Half a dozen extensions of the arms, alternating with half a dozen seizures of the rope with his feet, brought him up to the level of the soil.

He was saved, and by Elfride.

He extended his cramped limbs like an awakened sleeper, and sprang over the bank.

At sight of him she leaped to her feet with almost a shriek of joy. Knight's eyes met hers, and with supreme eloquence the glance of each told a long-concealed tale of emotion in that short half-moment. Moved by an impulse neither could resist, they ran together and into each other's arms.

At the moment of embracing, Elfride's eyes involuntarily

flashed toward the *Puffin* steamboat. It had doubled the point, and was no longer to be seen.

An overwhelming rush of exultation at having delivered the man she revered from one of the most terrible forms of death shook the gentle girl to the centre of her soul. It merged in a defiance of duty to Stephen and a total recklessness as to plighted faith. Every nerve of her will was now in entire subjection to her feeling—volition as a guiding power had forsaken her. To remain passive, as she remained now, encircled by his arms, was a sufficiently complete result—a glorious crown to all the years of her life. Perhaps he was only grateful, and did not love her. No matter; it was infinitely more to be even the slave of the greater than the queen of the less. Some such sensation as this, though it was not recognized as a finished thought, raced along the impressionable soul of Elfride.

Regarding their attitude, it was impossible for two persons to go nearer to a kiss than went Knight and Elfride during those minutes of impulsive embrace in the pelting rain. Yet they did not kiss. Knight's peculiarity of nature was such that it would not allow him to take advantage of the unguarded and passionate avowal she had tacitly made.

Elfride recovered herself, and gently struggled to be free.

He reluctantly relinquished her, and then surveyed her from crown to toe. She seemed as small as an infant. He perceived whence she had obtained the rope.

"Elfride, my Elfride!" he exclaimed, in gratified amazement.

"I must leave you now," she said, her face doubling its red, with an expression between gladness and shame. "You follow me, but at some distance."

"The rain and wind pierce you through; the chill will

kill you. God bless you for such devotion! Take my coat and put it on."

"No; I shall get warm running."

Elfride had absolutely nothing between her and the weather but her exterior robe or "costume." The door had been made upon a woman's wit, and it had found its way out. Behind the bank, while Knight reclined upon the dizzy slope waiting for death, she had taken off her whole clothing and replaced only her outer bodice and skirt. Every thread of the remainder lay upon the ground in the form of a woollen and cotton rope.

"I am used to being wet through," she added. "I have been drenched on Pansy dozens of times. Good-bye till we meet, clothed and in our right minds, by the fireside at home!"

She then ran off from him through the pelting rain like a hare; or more like a pheasant when, scampering away with a lowered tail, it has a mind to fly, but does not. Elfride was soon out of sight.

## The Voice Among the Trees[1]

*Robert Louis Stevenson* (1850–1894)

Partly from the damping influence of this alarm, partly to rest Silver and the sick folk, the whole party sat down as soon as they had gained the brow of the ascent.

The plateau being somewhat tilted toward the west, this spot on which we had paused commanded a wide prospect on either hand. Before us, over the tree-tops, we beheld the Cape of the Woods fringed with surf; behind, we not only looked down upon the anchorage and Skeleton Island, but saw—clear across the spit and the eastern low-

[1] From *Treasure Island*.

lands—a great field of open sea upon the east. Sheer above us rose the Spyglass, here dotted with single pines, there black with precipices. There was no sound but that of the distant breakers, mounting from all round, and the chirp of countless insects in the brush. Not a man, not a sail upon the sea; the very largeness of the view increased the sense of solitude.

Silver, as he sat, took certain bearings with his compass.

"There are three 'tall trees,'" said he, "about in the right line from Skeleton Island. 'Spyglass Shoulder,' I take it, means that lower p'int there. It's child's play to find the stuff now. I've half a mind to dine first."

"I don't feel sharp," growled Morgan. "Thinkin' o' Flint—I think it were—as done me."

"Ah, well, my son, you praise your stars he's dead," said Silver.

"He were an ugly devil," cried a third pirate, with a shudder; "that blue in the face, too!"

"That was how the rum took him," added Merry.

"Blue! well, I reckon he was blue. That's a true word."

Ever since they had found the skeleton and got upon this train of thought, they had spoken lower and lower, and they had almost got to whispering by now, so that the sound of their talk hardly interrupted the silence of the wood. All of a sudden, out of the middle of the trees in front of us, a thin, high, trembling voice struck up the well-known air and words:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

I never have seen men more dreadfully affected than the pirates. The color went from their six faces like enchantment; some leaped to their feet, some clawed hold of others; Morgan grovelled on the ground.

"It's Flint, by ——!" cried Merry.

The song had stopped as suddenly as it began—broken off, you would have said, in the middle of a note, as though some one had laid his hand upon the singer's mouth. Coming so far through the clear, sunny atmosphere among the green tree-tops, I thought it had sounded airily and sweetly; and the effect on my companions was the stranger.

"Come," said Silver, struggling with his ashen lips to get the word out, "this won't do. Stand by to go about. This is a rum start, and I can't name the voice; but it's some one skylarking—some one that's flesh and blood, and you may lay to that."

His courage had come back as he spoke, and some of the color to his face along with it. Already the others had begun to lend an ear to this encouragement, and were coming a little to themselves, when the same voice broke out again—not this time singing, but in a faint, distant hail, that echoed yet fainter among the clefts of the Spy-glass.

"Darby M'Graw," it wailed — for that is the word that best describes the sound—"Darby M'Graw! Darby M'Graw!" again and again and again; and then rising a little higher, and with an oath that I leave out, "Fetch aft the rum, Darby!"

The buccaneers remained rooted to the ground, their eyes starting from their heads. Long after the voice had died away they still stared in silence, dreadfully, before them.

"That fixes it!" gasped one. "Let's go."

"They was his last words," moaned Morgan, "his last words above board."

Dick had his Bible out, and was praying volubly. He had been well brought up, had Dick, before he came to sea and fell among bad companions.

Still. Silver was unconquered. I could hear his teeth rattle in his head; but he had not yet surrendered.

"Nobody in this here island ever heard of Darby," he muttered; "not one but us that's here." And then, making a great effort, "Shipmates," he cried, "I'm here to get that stuff, and I'll not be beat by man nor devil. I never was feared of Flint in his life, and, by the powers, I'll face him dead. There's seven hundred thousand pound not a quarter of a mile from here. When did ever a gentleman o' fortune show his stern to that much dollars for a boozy old seaman with a blue mug—and him dead, too?"

But there was no sign of reawakening courage in his followers; rather, indeed, of growing terror at the irreverence of his words.

"Belay there, John!" said Merry. "Don't you cross a sperrit."

And the rest were all too terrified to reply. They would have run away severally had they dared; but fear kept them together, and kept them close by John, as if his daring helped them. He, on his part, had pretty well fought his weakness down.

"Sperrit? Well, maybe," he said. "But there's one thing not clear to me. There was an echo. Now, no man ever seen a sperrit with a shadow; well, then, what's he doing with an echo to him, I should like to know? That ain't in natur', surely?"

This argument seemed weak enough to me. But you can never tell what will affect the superstitious, and, to my wonder, George Merry was greatly relieved.

"Well, that's so," he said. "You've a head upon your shoulders, John, and no mistake. 'Bout ship, mates! This here crew is on a wrong tack, I do believe. And come to think on it, it was Flint's voice, I grant you,

but not just so clear-away like it, after all. It was liker somebody else's voice now—it was liker—"

"By the powers, Ben Gunn!" roared Silver.

"Ay, and so it were," cried Morgan, springing on his knees. "Ben Gunn it were!"

"It don't make much odds, do it, now?" asked Dick. "Ben Gunn's not here in the body, any more'n Flint."

But the older hands greeted this remark with scorn.

"Why, nobody minds Ben Gunn," cried Merry; "dead or alive, nobody minds him."

It was extraordinary how their spirits had returned, and how the natural color had revived in their faces. Soon they were chatting together, with intervals of listening; and not long after, hearing no further sound, they shouldered the tools and set forth again, Merry walking first with Silver's compass to keep them on the right line with Skeleton Island. He had said the truth: dead or alive, nobody minded Ben Gunn.

Dick alone still held his Bible, and looked around him as he went, with fearful glances; but he found no sympathy, and Silver even joked him on his precautions.

"I told you," said he—"I told you you had sp'iled your Bible. If it ain't no good to swear by, what do you suppose a sperrit would give for it? Not that!" and he snapped his big fingers, halting a moment on his crutch.

But Dick was not to be comforted; indeed, it was soon plain to me that the lad was falling sick; hastened by heat, exhaustion, and the shock of his alarm, the fever predicted by Doctor Livesey was evidently growing swiftly higher.

It was fine, open walking here, upon the summit; our way lay a little down-hill, for, as I have said, the plateau tilted toward the west. The pines, great and small, grew wide apart; and even between the clumps of nutmeg and azalea wide open spaces baked in the hot sunshine. Strik-

ing, as we did, pretty near northwest across the island, we drew, on the one hand, ever nearer under the shoulders of the Spyglass, and on the other, looked ever wider over that western bay where I had once tossed and trembled in the coracle.

The first of the tall trees was reached, and by the bearing proved the wrong one. So with the second. The third rose nearly two hundred feet into the air above a clump of underwood; a giant of a vegetable, with a red column as big as a cottage, and a wide shadow around in which a company could have manœuvred. It was conspicuous far to sea on both the east and west, and might have been entered as a sailing mark upon the chart.

But it was not its size that now impressed my companions; it was the knowledge that seven hundred thousand pounds in gold lay somewhere buried below its spreading shadow. The thought of the money, as they drew nearer, swallowed up their previous terrors. Their eyes burned in their heads; their feet grew speedier and lighter; their whole soul was bound up in that fortune, that whole lifetime of extravagance and pleasure, that lay waiting there for each of them.

Silver hobbled, grunting, on his crutch; his nostrils stood out and quivered; he cursed like a madman when the flies settled on his hot and shiny countenance; he plucked furiously at the line that held me to him, and, from time to time, turned his eyes upon me with a deadly look. Certainly he took no pains to hide his thoughts; and certainly I read them like print. In the immediate nearness of the gold, all else had been forgotten; his promise and the doctor's warning were both things of the past; and I could not doubt that he hoped to seize upon the treasure, find and board the *Hispaniola* under cover of night, cut every honest throat about that island, and sail

away as he had at first intended, laden with crimes and riches.

Shaken as I was with these alarms, it was hard for me to keep up with the rapid pace of the treasure-hunters. Now and again I stumbled; and it was then that Silver plucked so roughly at the rope and launched at me his murderous glances. Dick, who had dropped behind us, and now brought up the rear, was babbling to himself both prayers and curses, as his fever kept rising. This also added to my wretchedness, and, to crown all, I was haunted by the thought of the tragedy that had once been acted on that plateau, when that ungodly buccaneer with the blue face—he who died at Savannah singing and shouting for drink—had there, with his own hand, cut down his six accomplices. This grove, that was now so peaceful, must then have rung with cries, I thought; and even with the thought I could believe I heard it ringing still.

We were now at the margin of the thicket.

"Huzza, mates, all together!" shouted Merry; and the foremost broke into a run.

And suddenly, not ten yards farther, we beheld them stop. A low cry arose. Silver doubled his pace, digging away with the foot of his crutch like one possessed; and next moment he and I had come also to a dead halt.

Before us was a great excavation, not very recent, for the sides had fallen in and grass had sprouted on the bottom. In this were the shaft of a pick broken in two and the boards of several packing cases strewn around. On one of these boards I saw, branded with a hot iron, the name *Walrus*—the name of Flint's ship.

All was clear to probation. The *cache* had been found and rifled; the seven hundred thousand pounds were gone!

## The Death of Dorian Gray[1]

*Oscar Wilde* (1856–1900)

[*The Picture of Dorian Gray* is the story of a man, exquisitely beautiful, who is able to sin without bearing the external, physical signs of sinning. His natural beauty is, in the first instance, the outcome of his spotless youth. As a young man his portrait is painted by his friend and admirer, Basil Hallward. The portrait causes him to realize, for the first time, his own physical perfection. As he stands before it he says, "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular June day. If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that—for that—I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!" Lord Henry Wotton hears his remark and from that point on becomes the evil genius of the book, making it his purpose cynically to tarnish Dorian's innocence. Dorian's first proof that his mad wish—that the picture may grow old while he remains forever young — has been granted comes to light by reason of his treatment of a young girl, Sibyl Vane, who commits suicide for his sake. When he looks at the portrait, he sees that it has changed—the mouth has become cruel and derisive. Thereupon he hides it in a garret at the top of the house, which had been his study as a boy, that no one may discover his secret. He plunges into scenes of stealthy riot to forget himself, secure in the knowledge that the portrait alone will grow hideous, while he himself will retain his external beauty and innocence. Basil Hallward, the painter, having heard rumours of his way of life, comes to expostulate with him. He murders him. On looking at the portrait he sees that its hand is stained with blood. He compels Alan Campbell, a scientist, to come and rid him of the body. Alan Campbell



[1] From *The Picture of Dorian Gray.*

commits suicide. Sibyl Vane's brother, a sailor, follows him to exact revenge. He is shot by a guest who is staying with Dorian. Having tired of being wicked, Dorian decides to turn over a new leaf and begin again. He has been planning the ruin of a country girl, named Hetty Merton, having won her love as though his purpose was honest. His first attempt at being good is to spare her. He tells Lord Henry Wotton, who laughs at him, saying that his action is not the result of virtue, but of desire to experience a new sensation. Dorian, distrustful of himself, believes this assertion, after which follows the final scene, here included.]

It was a lovely night, so warm that he threw his coat over his arm, and did not even put his silk scarf round his throat. As he strolled home, smoking his cigarette, two young men in evening dress passed him. He heard one of them whisper to the other, "That is Dorian Gray." He remembered how pleased he used to be when he was pointed out, or stared at, or talked about. He was tired of hearing his own name now. Half the charm of the little village where he had been so often lately was that no one knew who he was. He had often told the girl whom he had lured to love him that he was poor, and she had believed him. He had told her once that he was wicked, and she had laughed at him, and answered that wicked people were always very old and very ugly. What a laugh she had!—just like a thrush singing. And how pretty she had been in her cotton dresses and her large hats! She knew nothing, but she had everything that he had lost.

When he reached home he found his servant waiting up for him. He sent him to bed, and threw himself down on the sofa in the library, and began to think over some of the things that Lord Henry had said to him.

Was it really true that one could never change? He felt a wild longing for the unstained purity of his boyhood

—his rose-white boyhood, as Lord Henry had once called it. He knew that he had tarnished himself, filled his mind with corruption, and given horror to his fancy; that he had been an evil influence to others, and had experienced a terrible joy in being so; and that of the lives that had crossed his own it had been the fairest and the most full of promise that he had brought to shame. But was it all irretrievable? Was there no hope for him?

Ah! in what a monstrous moment of pride and passion he had prayed that the portrait should bear the burden of his days, and he keep the unsullied splendor of eternal youth! All his failure had been due to that. Better for him that each sin of his life had brought its sure, swift penalty along with it. There was purification in punishment. Not "Forgive us our sins," but "Smite us for our iniquities," should be the prayer of man to a most just God.

The curiously carved mirror that Lord Henry had given to him, so many years ago now, was standing on the table, and the white-limbed Cupids laughed round it as of old. He took it up as he had done on that night of horror, when he had first noted the change in the fatal picture, and with wild, tear-dimmed eyes looked into its polished shield. Once some one who had terribly loved him had written to him a mad letter, ending with these idolatrous words: "The world is changed because you are made of ivory and gold. The curves of your lips rewrite history." The phrases came back to his memory, and he repeated them over and over to himself. Then he loathed his own beauty, and, flinging the mirror on the floor, crushed it into silver splinters beneath his heel. It was his beauty that had ruined him, his beauty and the youth that he had prayed for. But for those two things his life might have been free from stain. His beauty had been to him but a mask,

his youth but a mockery. What was youth at best? A green and unripe time—a time of shallow moods and sickly thoughts. Why had he worn its livery? Youth had spoiled him.

It was better not to think of the past. Nothing could alter that. It was of himself and of his own future that he had to think. James Vane was hidden in a nameless grave in Selby churchyard. Alan Campbell had shot himself one night in his laboratory, but had not revealed the secret that he had been forced to know. The excitement, such as it was, over Basil Hallward's disappearance would soon pass away. It was already waning. He was perfectly safe there. Nor, indeed, was it the death of Basil Hallward that weighed most upon his mind. It was the living death of his own soul that troubled him. Basil had painted the portrait that had marred his life. He could not forgive him that. It was the portrait that had done everything. Basil had said things to him that were unbearable, and that he had yet borne with patience. The murder had been simply the madness of a moment. As for Alan Campbell, his suicide had been his own act. He had chosen to do it. It was nothing to him.

A new life! That was what he wanted. That was what he was waiting for. Surely he had begun it already. He had spared one innocent thing, at any rate. He would never again tempt innocence. He would be good.

As he thought of Hetty Merton he began to wonder if the portrait in the locked room had changed. Surely it was not still so horrible as it had been? Perhaps if his life became pure he would be able to expel every sign of evil passion from the face. Perhaps the signs of evil had already gone away. He would go and look.

He took the lamp from the table and crept up-stairs. As he unbarred the door a smile of joy flitted across his

strangely young-looking face and lingered for a moment about his lips. Yes, he would be good, and the hideous thing that he had hidden away would no longer be a terror to him. He felt as if the load had been lifted from him already.

He went in quietly, locking the door behind him, as was his custom, and dragged the purple hanging from the portrait. A cry of pain and indignation broke from him. He could see no change, save that in the eyes there was a look of cunning, and in the mouth the curved wrinkle of the hypocrite. The thing was still loathsome—more loathsome, if possible, than before—and the scarlet dew that spotted the hand seemed brighter, and more like blood newly spilled. Then he trembled. Had it been merely vanity that had made him do his one good deed? Or the desire of a new sensation, as Lord Henry had hinted, with his mocking laugh? Or that passion to act a part that sometimes makes us do things finer than we are ourselves? Or, perhaps, all these? And why was the red stain larger than it had been? It seemed to have crept like a horrible disease over the wrinkled fingers. There was blood on the painted feet, as though the blood had dripped—blood even on the hand that had not held the knife. Confess? Did it mean that he was to confess? To give himself up, and be put to death? He laughed. He felt that the idea was monstrous. Besides, even if he did confess, who would believe him? There was no trace of the murdered man anywhere. Everything belonging to him had been destroyed. He himself had burned what had been below stairs. The world would simply say that he was mad. They would shut him up if he persisted in his story. . . . Yet it was his duty to confess, to suffer public shame, and to make public atonement. There was a God who called upon men to tell their sins to earth as well as to heaven.

Nothing that he could do would cleanse him till he had told his own sin. His sin? He shrugged his shoulders. The death of Basil Hallward seemed very little to him. He was thinking of Hetty Merton. For it was an unjust mirror, this mirror of his soul that he was looking at. Vanity? Curiosity? Hypocrisy? Had there been nothing more in his renunciation than that? There had been something more. At least he thought so. But who could tell? . . . No. There had been nothing more. Through vanity he had spared her. In hypocrisy he had worn the mask of goodness. For curiosity's sake he had tried the denial of self. He recognized that now.

But this murder—was it to dog him all his life? Was he always to be burdened by his past? Was he really to confess? Never. There was only one bit of evidence left against him. The picture itself—that was evidence. He would destroy it. Why had he kept it so long? Once it had given him pleasure to watch it changing and growing old. Of late he had felt no such pleasure. It had kept him awake at night. When he had been away he had been filled with terror lest other eyes should look upon it. It had brought melancholy across his passions. Its mere memory had marred many moments of joy. It had been like conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it.

He looked round, and saw the knife that had stabbed Basil Hallward. He had cleaned it many times, till there was no stain left upon it. It was bright, and glistened. As it had killed the painter, so it would kill the painter's work, and all that that meant. It would kill the past, and when that was dead he would be free. It would kill this monstrous soul-life, and without its hideous warnings he would be at peace. He seized the thing, and stabbed the picture with it.

There was a cry heard, and a crash. The cry was so horrible in its agony that the frightened servants woke and crept out of their rooms. Two gentlemen, who were passing in the Square below, stopped and looked up at the great house. They walked on till they met a policeman, and brought him back. The man rang the bell several times, but there was no answer. Except for a light in one of the top windows the house was all dark. After a time he went away and stood in an adjoining portico and watched.

"Whose house is that, constable?" asked the elder of the two gentlemen.

"Mr. Dorian Gray's, sir," answered the policeman.

They looked at each other as they walked away, and sneered.

Inside, in the servants' part of the house, the half-clad domestics were talking in low whispers to each other. Old Mrs. Leaf was crying and wringing her hands. Francis was as pale as death.

After about a quarter of an hour he got the coachman and one of the footmen and crept up-stairs. They knocked, but there was no reply. They called out. Everything was still. Finally, after vainly trying to force the door, they got on the roof and dropped down on to the balcony. The windows yielded easily; their bolts were old.

When they entered they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was.

## The Death of a Gentleman[1]

*Margaret Deland* (1857)

Mr. Denner had failed very perceptibly since the day before. He looked strangely little in the great bed, and his brown eyes had grown large and bright. But he greeted the rector with courteous cordiality, under which his faint voice faltered, and almost broke.

"How are you to-day, Denner?" his friend said, sitting down on the edge of the bed and taking the sick man's hand in his big, warm grasp.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Denner, with laboring breath, "I am doing very nicely."

"Has Giff been here this morning?" asked Doctor Howe.

"Yes," the lawyer answered. "He has gone home for an hour. Mary takes excellent care of me, and I felt I was really keeping him too much from his aunts. For his stay is limited, you know, and I am afraid I have been selfish in keeping him so much with me."

"No, no," the rector said, "it is a pleasure for him to be with you; it is a pleasure for any of us. Poor little Lois is dreadfully depressed about you—she begs to come and nurse you herself; and Helen—Helen came last night, you know—she wants to be of some use, too."

"Oh, well, now, dear me," remonstrated Mr. Denner, feebly. "Miss Lois must not have a moment's uneasiness about me—not a moment's. Pray tell her I am doing nicely; and it is really of no consequence in the world—not the slightest."

[1] From *John Ward, Preacher*, by Margaret Deland, published by the Houghton Mifflin Company. Copyright, 1888, by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. This abstract is included by the courtesy of the publishers.

Then Mr. Denner began to speak of Gifford's kindness, and how good every one in the village had been to him; even Mary had softened wonderfully in the last few days, though of this the sick man did not speak, for it would seem to imply that Mary had not always been all she might be, and, in view of her present kindness, it would have been ungracious to draw attention to that.

"Yes," Mr. Denner ended, folding his little hands on the counterpane, "it is worth while to have had this indisposition (except for the trouble it has given to others) just to see how good every one is. Gifford has been exceedingly kind and thoughtful. His gentleness—for I have been very troublesome, doctor—has been wonderful. Like a woman's; at least, so I should imagine."

The rector had clasped his hands upon his stick, and was looking intently at Mr. Denner, his lower lip thrust out and his eyebrows gathered in an absent frown.

"William," he said, suddenly, "you've seen the doctor this morning?"

"Yes," Mr. Denner answered, "oh yes. He is very kind about getting here early; the nights seem quite long, and it is a relief to see him early."

"I have not seen him to-day," said Doctor Howe, slowly, "but yesterday he made me feel very anxious about you. Yes, we were all quite anxious, William."

The lawyer gave a little start, and looked sharply at his old friend; then he said, hesitating slightly, "That—ah—that was yesterday, did I understand you to say?"

Doctor Howe leaned forward and took one of Mr. Denner's trembling little hands in his, which was strong and firm. "Yes," he said, gently, "but, William, my dear old friend, I am anxious still. I cannot help—I cannot help fearing that—that—"

"Stay," interrupted Mr. Denner, with a visible effort

at composure, "I—I quite understand. Pray spare yourself the pain of speaking of it, Archibald. You are very kind, but—I quite understand."

He put his hand before his eyes a moment, and then blindly stretched it out to his friend. The rector took it, and held it hard in his own. The two men were silent. Mr. Denner was the first to speak.

"It is very good in you to come and tell me, Archibald. I fear it has discomposed you; it was very painful for you. Pray do not allow yourself to feel the slightest annoyance; it is of no consequence, I —ah—assure you. But since we are on the subject, perhaps you will kindly mention—how —how soon?"

"I hope, I trust," answered the rector, huskily, "it may not be for several days."

"But probably," said Mr. Denner, calmly—"probably —sooner?"

Doctor Howe bowed his head.

"Ah—just so—just so. I—I thank you, Archibald."

Suddenly the rector drew a long breath, and straightened himself, as though he had forgotten something. "It must come to us all, sooner or later," he said, gently, "and if we have lived well we need not dread it. Surely you need not, of all the men I have ever known."

"I have always endeavored," said Mr. Denner, in a voice which still trembled a little, "to remember that I was a gentleman."

Doctor Howe opened his lips and shut them again before he spoke. "I—I meant that the trust in God, William, of a Christian man, which is yours, must be your certain support now."

The lawyer looked up with a faint surprise dawning in his eyes. "Ah—you are very good to say so, I'm sure," he replied, courteously.

Doctor Howe moved his hands nervously, clasping and reclasping them upon the head of his stick. "Yes, William," he said, after a moment's silence, "that trust in God which leads us safely through all the dark places in life will not fail us at the end. The rod and the staff still comfort us."

"Ay—yes," responded Mr. Denner.

The rector gained confidence as he spoke. "And you must have that blessed assurance of the love of God, William," he continued; "your life has been so pure and good. You must see in this visitation not chastisement, but mercy."

Doctor Howe's hand moved slowly back to the big pocket in one of his black coat-tails, and brought out a small, shabby prayer-book.

"You will let me read the prayers for the sick," he continued gently, and without waiting for a reply began to say, with more feeling than Doctor Howe often put into the reading of the service:

"Dearly beloved, know this, that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining; as—"

"Archibald," said Mr. Denner, faintly, "you will excuse me, but this is not—not necessary, as it were."

Doctor Howe looked at him blankly, the prayer-book closing in his hand.

"I mean," Mr. Denner added, "if you will allow me to say so, the time for—for speaking thus has passed. It is now, with me, Archibald."

There was a wistful look in his eyes as he spoke.

"I know," answered Doctor Howe, tenderly, thinking that the Visitation of the Sick must wait, "but God enters into now; the Eternal is our refuge, a very present help in time of trouble."

"Ah—yes," said the sick man; "but I should like to approach this from our usual—point of view, if you will be so good. I have every respect for your office, but would it not be easier for us to speak of—of this, as we have been in the habit of speaking on all subjects, quite—in our ordinary way, as it were? You will pardon me, Archibald, if I say anything else seems—ah—unreal?"

Doctor Howe rose and walked to the window. He stood there a few minutes, but the golden June day was dim, and there was a tightening in his throat that kept him silent. When he came back to the bedside, he stood looking down at the sick man, without speaking. Mr. Denner was embarrassed.

"I did not mean to pain you," he said.

"William," the rector answered, "have I made religion so worthless? Have I held it up so weakly that you feel that it cannot help you now?"

"Oh, not at all," responded Mr. Denner, "not at all. I have the greatest respect for it—I fear I expressed myself awkwardly—the greatest respect; I fully appreciate its value, I might say its necessity, in the community. But—if you please, Archibald, since you have kindly come to tell me of this—change, I should like to speak of it in our ordinary way; to approach the subject as men of the world. It is in this manner, if you will be so good, I should like to ask you a question. I think we quite understand each other; it is unnecessary to be anything but—natural."

The clergyman took his place on the side of the bed, but he leaned his head on his hand, and his eyes were hidden. "Ask me anything you will. Yet, though I may not have lived it, William, I cannot answer you as anything but a Christian man now."

"Just so," said Denner, politely—"ah—certainly; but, between ourselves, doctor, putting aside this amiable and

pleasing view of the church, you understand—speaking just as we are in the habit of doing—what do you suppose —what do you think—is beyond?"

His voice had sunk to a whisper, and his eager eyes searched Doctor Howe's face.

"How can we tell?" answered the rector. "That it is infinitely good we can trust; 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard—'" He stopped, for Mr. Denner shook his head with a fine sort of impatience.

"If you please, doctor!"

The rector was silent.

"I have wondered about it often," the other continued. "I have expected—this, for some days, and I have wondered. Think how strange; in a few days—almost a few hours, I shall know all, or—nothing! Yes, the mystery of all the ages will be mine!" There was a thrill of triumph in his feeble voice. "Think of that, doctor. I shall know more than the wisest man that lives—I! I was never a very clever person, never very wise; and yet here is a knowledge which shall not be too wonderful for me, and to which I can attain."

He held up his little thin hand, peering at the light between the transparent fingers. "To think," he said, slowly, with a puzzled smile—"to think that this is going to be still! It has never been any power in the world; I don't know that it has ever done any harm, yet it has certainly never done any good; but soon it will be still. How strange, how strange! And where shall I be? Knowing—or perhaps fallen on an eternal sleep. How does it seem to you, doctor? That was what I wanted to ask you; do you feel sure of anything—afterward?"

The rector could not escape the penetrating gaze of those strangely bright, brown eyes. He looked into them, and then wavered and turned away.

"Do you?" said the lawyer.

The other put his hands up to his face a moment.

"Ah!" he answered, sharply, "I don't know—I can't tell. I—I don't know, Denner!"

"No," replied Mr. Denner, with tranquil satisfaction, "I supposed not—I supposed not. But when a man gets where I am, it seems the one thing in the world worth being sure of."

Doctor Howe sat silently holding the lawyer's hand, and Mr. Denner seemed to sink into pleasant thought. Once he smiled, with that puzzled, happy look the rector had seen before, and then he closed his eyes contentedly as though to doze. Suddenly he turned his head and looked out of the window, across his garden, where a few old-fashioned flowers were blooming sparsely, with much space between them for the rich, soft grass, which seemed to hold the swinging shadows of an elm-tree in a lacy tangle.

"'The warm precincts of the cheerful day,'" he murmured, and then his eyes wandered about the room; the empty, blackened fireplace, where, on a charred log and a heap of gray ashes, a single bar of sunshine had fallen; his fiddle, lying on a heap of manuscript music; the one or two formal portraits of the women of his family; and the large painting of Admiral Denner in red coat and gold lace. On each one he lingered with a loving, wondering gaze. "'The place thereof shall know it,'" he began to say. "Ah, doctor, it is a wonderful book! How it does know the heart! The soul sees itself there. 'As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more'—no more. That is the wonder of it! How strange it is; and I had such plans for life now! Well, it is better thus, no doubt—no doubt."

After a while he touched the little oval velvet case which

lay on the table beside him, and, taking it up, looked long and earnestly at the childish face inside the rim of blackened pearls.

"I wonder—" he said, and then stopped, laying it down again with a little sigh. "Ah, well, I shall know. It is only to wait."

He did not seem to want any answer; it was enough to ramble on, filled with placid content, between dreams and waking, his hand held firm in that of his old friend. Afterward, when Gifford came in, he scarcely noticed that the rector slipped away. It was enough to fill his mist of dreams with gentle wonderings and a quiet expectation. Once he said, softly, "In the hour of death, and in the day of judgment—"

"Good Lord, deliver us!" Gifford finished, gently.

Mr. Denner opened his eyes and looked at him.

"Good Lord," he said, "ah, yes—yes—that is enough, my friend. *Good* Lord; one leaves the rest."

# IV

# Children in Fiction

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*Charles Dickens* (1812–1870)

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## Peregrine Pickle[1]

*Tobias Smollett* (1721–1771)

It is reported of him, that before the first year of his infancy was elapsed, he used very often, immediately after being dressed, in the midst of the caresses which were bestowed upon him by his mother, while she indulged herself in the contemplation of her own happiness, all of a sudden to alarm her with a fit of shrieks and cries, which continued with great violence till he was stripped to the skin with the utmost expedition by order of his affrighted parent, who thought his tender body was tortured by the misapplication of some unlucky pin; and when he had given them all this disturbance and unnecessary trouble, he would lie sprawling and laughing in their faces, as if he ridiculed the impertinence of their concern. Nay, it is affirmed that one day, when an old woman who attended in the nursery had by stealth conveyed a bottle of cordial waters to her mouth, he pulled his nurse by the sleeve, by a slight glance detected the theft, and tipped her the wink with a particular slyness of countenance, as if he had said, with a sneer, "Ay, ay, that is what you must all come to." But these instances of reflection in a babe nine months old are so incredible, that I look upon them as *ex post facto* observations, founded upon imaginary recollection, when he was in a more advanced age, and his peculiarities of temper became much more remarkable; of

[1] From *Peregrine Pickle*.

a piece with the ingenious discoveries of those sagacious observers, who can discern something evidently characteristic in the features of any noted personage whose character they have previously heard explained. Yet, without pretending to specify at what period of his childhood this singularity first appeared, I can with great truth declare that when he first attracted the notice and affection of his uncle, it was plainly perceivable.

One would imagine he had marked out the commodore as a proper object of ridicule, for almost all his little childish satire was levelled against him. I will not deny that he might have been influenced in this particular by the example and instruction of Mr. Hatchway, who delighted in superintending the first essays of his genius. As the gout had taken up its residence in Mr. Trunnion's great toe, whence it never removed, no not for a day, little Perry took great pleasure in treading by accident on this infirm member; and when his uncle, incensed by the pain, used to damn him for a hell-begotten brat, he would appease him in a twinkling, by returning the curse with equal emphasis, and asking what was the matter with old Hannibal Tough? an appellation by which the lieutenant had taught him to distinguish this grim commander.

Neither was this the only experiment he tried upon the patience of the commodore, with whose nose he used to take indecent freedoms, even while he was fondled on his knee. In one month he put him to the expense of two guineas in sealskin, by picking his pocket of divers tobacco-pouches, all of which he in secret committed to the flames. Nor did the caprice of his disposition abstain from the favourite beverage of Trunnion, who more than once swallowed a whole draught in which his brother's snuff-box had been emptied before he perceived the disagreeable infusion; and one day, when the commodore had chastized

him by a gentle tap with his cane, he fell flat on the floor as if he had been deprived of all sense and motion, to the terror and amazement of the striker; and after having filled the whole house with confusion and dismay, opened his eyes and laughed heartily at the success of his own imposition.

It would be an endless and perhaps no very agreeable task to enumerate all the unlucky pranks he played upon his uncle and others, before he attained the fourth year of his age; about which time he was sent, with an attendant, to a day-school in the neighbourhood, that (to use his good mother's own expression) he might be out of harm's way. Here, however, he made little progress, except in mischief, which he practised with impunity, because the schoolmistress would run no risk of disobliging a lady of fortune, by exercising unnecessary severities upon her only child. Nevertheless, Mrs. Pickle was not so blindly partial as to be pleased with such unseasonable indulgence. Perry was taken out of the hands of this courteous teacher, and committed to the instruction of a pedagogue, who was ordered to administer such correction as the boy should in his opinion deserve. This authority he did not neglect to use; his pupil was regularly flogged twice a day; and, after having been subjected to this course of discipline for the space of eighteen months, declared the most obstinate, dull, and untoward genius that ever had fallen under his cultivation; instead of being reformed, he seemed rather hardened and confirmed in his vicious inclinations, and was dead to all sense of fear as well as shame.

His mother was extremely mortified at these symptoms of stupidity, which she considered as an inheritance derived from the spirit of his father, and consequently insurmountable by all the efforts of human care. But the commodore rejoiced over the ruggedness of his nature, and was partic-

ularly pleased when, upon inquiry, he found that Perry had beaten all the boys in the school; a circumstance from which he prognosticated everything that was fair and fortunate in his future fate; observing, that at his age he himself was just such another.

## Pearl[1]

*Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1807–1864)

[Hester Prynne, the mother of Pearl, has been condemned by the magistrates of the Colony of Massachusetts to wear the scarlet letter on her breast, because her child is illegitimate. The scarlet letter is the badge of her shame, being the initial letter of the name of her offence. She has never divulged the paternity of her child, for the reason that Pearl's father is an honoured minister in the Colony, the Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale. She has brought her child into the forest, in order that she may meet him.]

"Mother," said little Pearl, "the sunshine does not love you. It runs away and hides itself, because it is afraid of something on your bosom. Now see! There it is, playing, a good way off. Stand you here, and let me run and catch it. I am but a child. It will not flee from me; for I wear nothing on my bosom yet!"

"Nor ever will, my child, I hope," said Hester.

"And why not, mother?" asked Pearl, stopping short, just at the beginning of her race. "Will not it come of its own accord, when I am a woman grown?"

"Run away, child," answered her mother, "and catch the sunshine! It will soon be gone."

Pearl set forth, at a great pace, and, as Hester smiled to perceive, did actually catch the sunshine, and stood

[1] From *The Scarlet Letter*.

laughing in the midst of it, all brightened by its splendor, and scintillating with the vivacity excited by rapid motion. The light lingered about the lonely child, as if glad of such a playmate, until her mother had drawn almost nigh enough to step into the magic circle, too.

"It will go now," said Pearl, shaking her head.

"See!" answered Hester, smiling. "Now I can stretch out my hand and grasp some of it."

As she attempted to do so, the sunshine vanished; or, to judge from the bright expression that was dancing on Pearl's features, her mother could have fancied that the child had absorbed it into herself, and would give it forth again, with a gleam about her path, as they should plunge into some gloomier shade. There was no other attribute that so much impressed her with a sense of new and untransmitted vigor in Pearl's nature, as this never failing vivacity of spirits; she had not the disease of sadness which almost all children, in these latter days, inherit, with the scrofula, from the troubles of their ancestors. Perhaps this too was a disease, and but the reflex of the wild energy with which Hester had fought against her sorrows before Pearl's birth. It was certainly a doubtful charm, imparting a hard, metallic lustre to the child's character. She wanted—what some people want throughout life—a grief that should deeply touch her, and thus humanize and make her capable of sympathy. But there was time enough yet for little Pearl.

"Come, my child!" said Hester, looking about her from the spot where Pearl had stood still in the sunshine. "We will sit down a little way within the wood, and rest ourselves."

"I am not aweary, mother," replied the little girl. "But you may sit down, if you will tell me a story meanwhile."

"A story, child!" said Hester. "And about what?"

"Oh, a story about the Black Man," answered Pearl, taking hold of her mother's gown and looking up, half earnestly, half mischievously, into her face. "How he haunts this forest and carries a book with him—a big, heavy book, with iron clasps; and how this ugly Black Man offers his book and an iron pen to everybody that meets him here among the trees; and they are to write their names with their own blood. And then he sets his mark on their bosoms! Didst thou ever meet the Black Man, mother?"

"And who told you this story, Pearl?" asked her mother, recognizing a common superstition of the period.

"It was the old dame in the chimney-corner, at the house where you watched last night," said the child. "But she fancied me asleep while she was talking of it. She said that a thousand and a thousand people had met him here, and had written in his book, and have his mark on them. And that ugly-tempered lady, old Mistress Hibbins, was one. And, mother, the old dame said that this scarlet letter was the Black Man's mark on thee, and that it glows like a red flame when thou meetest him at midnight here in the dark wood. Is it true, mother? And dost thou go to meet him in the night-time?"

"Didst thou ever awake and find thy mother gone?" asked Hester.

"Not that I remember," said the child. "If thou fearest to leave me in our cottage thou mightest take me along with thee. I would very gladly go! But, mother, tell me now! Is there such a Black Man? And didst thou ever meet him? And is this his mark?"

"Wilt thou let me be at peace, if I once tell thee?" asked her mother.

"Yes, if thou tellest me all," answered Pearl.

"Once in my life I met the Black Man!" said her mother. "This scarlet letter is his mark!"

Thus conversing they entered sufficiently deep into the wood to secure themselves from the observation of any casual passenger along the forest track. Here they sat down on a luxuriant heap of moss; which, at some epoch of the preceding century, had been a gigantic pine, with its roots and trunk in the darksome shade, and its head aloft in the upper atmosphere. It was a little dell where they had seated themselves with a leaf-strewn bank rising gently on either side, and a brook flowing through the midst, over a bed of fallen and drowned leaves. The trees impending over it had flung down great branches, from time to time, which choked up the current and compelled it to form eddies and black depths at some points; while, in its swifter and livelier passages, there appeared a channelway of pebbles and brown, sparkling sand. Letting the eyes follow along the course of the stream, they could catch the reflected light from its water, at some short distance within the forest, but soon lost all traces of it amid the bewilderment of tree-trunks and underbrush, and here and there a huge rock covered over with gray lichens. All these giant trees and bowlders of granite seemed intent on making a mystery of the course of this small brook; fearing, perhaps, that, with its never ceasing loquacity, it should whisper tales out of the heart of the old forest whence it flowed, or mirror its revelations on the smooth surface of a pool. Continually, indeed, as it stole onward, the streamlet kept up a babble, kind, quiet, soothing, but melancholy, like the voice of a young child that was spending its infancy without playfulness, and knew not how to be merry among sad acquaintance and events of sombre hue.

"Oh brook! Oh foolish and tiresome little brook!" cried Pearl, after listening awhile to its talk. "Why art thou

so sad? Pluck up a spirit and do not be all the time sighing and murmuring!"

But the brook, in the course of its little lifetime among the forest-trees, had gone through so solemn an experience that it could not help talking about it, and seemed to have nothing else to say. Pearl resembled the brook, inasmuch as the current of her life gushed from a well-spring as mysterious, and had flowed through scenes shadowed as heavily with gloom. But, unlike the little stream, she danced and sparkled, and prattled airily along her course.

"What does this sad little brook say, mother?" inquired she.

"If thou hadst a sorrow of thine own, the brook might tell thee of it," answered her mother, "even as it is telling me of mine! But now, Pearl, I hear a footstep along the path, and the noise of one putting aside the branches. I would have thee betake thyself to play, and leave me to speak with him that comes yonder."

"Is it the Black Man?" asked Pearl.

"Wilt thou go and play, child?" repeated her mother. "But do not stray far into the wood. And take heed that thou come at my first call."

"Yes, mother," answered Pearl. "But if it be the Black Man, wilt thou not let me stay a moment and look at him with his big book under his arm?"

"Go, silly child!" said her mother, impatiently. "It is no Black Man! Thou canst see him now, through the trees. It is the minister!"

"And so it is!" said the child. "And, mother, he has his hand over his heart! Is it because, when the minister wrote his name in the book, the Black Man set his mark in that place? But why does he not wear it outside his bosom, as thou dost, mother?"

"Go now, child, and thou shalt tease me as thou wilt

another time," cried Hester Prynne. "But do not stray far. Keep where thou canst hear the babble of the brook."

The child went singing away, following up the current of the brook, and striving to mingle a more lightsome cadence with its melancholy voice. But the little stream would not be comforted, and still kept telling its unintelligible secret of some very mournful mystery that had happened—or making a prophetic lamentation about something that was yet to happen—within the verge of the dismal forest. So Pearl, who had enough of shadow in her own little life, chose to break off all acquaintance with this repining brook. She set herself, therefore, to gathering violets and wood-anemones, and some scarlet columbines that she found growing in the crevices of a high rock.

## Topsy[1]

*Harriet Beecher Stowe* (1811–1896)

One morning, while Miss Ophelia was busy in some of her domestic cares, St. Clare's voice was heard calling her at the foot of the stairs.

"Come down here, cousin; I've something to show you."

"What is it?" said Miss Ophelia, coming down with her sewing in her hand.

"I've made a purchase for your department—see here," said St. Clare; and, with the word, he pulled along a little negro girl about eight or nine years of age.

She was one of the blackest of her race; and her round, shining eyes, glittering as glass beads, moved with quick and restless glances over everything in the room. Her mouth, half open with astonishment at the wonders of the

[1] From *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

new mas'r's parlor, displayed a white and brilliant set of teeth. Her woolly hair was braided in sundry little tails, which stuck out in every direction. The expression of her face was an odd mixture of shrewdness and cunning, over which was oddly drawn, like a kind of veil, an expression of the most doleful gravity and solemnity. She was dressed in a single filthy, ragged garment, made of bagging; and stood with her hands demurely folded before her. Altogether, there was something odd and goblin-like about her appearance—something, as Miss Ophelia afterward said, "so heathenish," as to inspire that good lady with utter dismay; and, turning to St. Clare, she said:

"Augustine, what in the world have you brought that thing here for?"

"For you to educate, to be sure, and train in the way she should go. I thought she was rather a funny specimen in the Jim Crow line. Here, Topsy," he added, giving a whistle, as a man would to call the attention of a dog, "give us a song, now, and show us some of your dancing."

The black, glassy eyes glittered with a kind of wicked drollery, and the thing struck up, in a clear shrill voice, an odd negro melody, to which she kept time with her hands and feet, spinning round, clapping her hands, knocking her knees together, in a wild, fantastic sort of time, and producing in her throat all those odd guttural sounds which distinguish the native music of her race; and finally, turning a somerset or two, and giving a prolonged closing note, as odd and unearthly as that of a steam-whistle, she came suddenly down on the carpet and stood with her hands folded and a most sanctimonious expression of meekness and solemnity over her face, only broken by the cunning glances which she shot askance from the corners of her eyes.

Miss Ophelia stood silent, perfectly paralyzed with amazement.

St. Clare, like a mischievous fellow as he was, appeared to enjoy her astonishment; and, addressing the child again, said:

"Topsy, this is your new mistress. I'm going to give you up to her; see, now, that you behave yourself."

"Yes, Mas'r," said Topsy, with sanctimonious gravity, her wicked eyes twinkling as she spoke.

"You're going to be good, Topsy, you understand," said St. Clare.

"Oh yes, Mas'r," said Topsy, with another twinkle, her hands still devoutly folded.

"Now, Augustine, what upon earth is this for?" said Miss Ophelia. "Your house is so full of these little plagues now, that a body can't set down their foot without treading on 'em. I get up in the morning and find one asleep behind the door, and see one black head poking out from under the table, one lying on the door-mat—and they are moping and mowing and grinning between all the railings, and tumbling over the kitchen floor! What on earth did you want to bring this one for?"

"For you to educate—didn't I tell you? You're always preaching about educating. I thought I would make you a present of a fresh-caught specimen, and let you try your hand on her, and bring her up in the way she should go."

"*I* don't want her, I am sure—I have more to do with 'em now than I want to."

"That's you Christians, all over!—you'll get up a society, and get some poor missionary to spend all his days among just such heathen. But let me see one of you that would take one into your house with you, and take the labor of their conversion on yourselves! No; when it comes to that, they are dirty and disagreeable, and it's too much care, and so on."

"Augustine, you know I didn't think of it in that light,"

said Miss Ophelia, evidently softening. "Well, it might be a real missionary work," said she, looking rather more favorably on the child.

St. Clare had touched the right string. Miss Ophelia's conscientiousness was ever on the alert. "But," she added, "I really didn't see the need of buying this one: there are enough now, in your house, to take all my time and skill."

"Well, then, cousin," said St. Clare, drawing her aside, "I ought to beg your pardon for my good-for-nothing speeches. You are so good, after all, that there's no sense in them. Why, the fact is, this concern belonged to a couple of drunken creatures that keep a low restaurant that I have to pass by every day, and I was tired of hearing her screaming, and them beating and swearing at her. She looked bright and funny, too, as if something might be made of her—so I bought her, and I'll give her to you. Try, now, and give her a good orthodox New England bringing up, and see what it 'll make of her. You know I haven't any gift that way; but I'd like you to try."

"Well, I'll do what I can," said Miss Ophelia; and she approached her new subject very much as a person might be supposed to approach a black spider, supposing them to have benevolent designs toward it.

"She's dreadfully dirty, and half naked," she said.

"Well, take her down-stairs and make some of them clean and clothe her up."

Miss Ophelia carried her to the kitchen regions.

"Don't see what Mas'r St. Clare wants of 'nother nigger!" said Dinah, surveying the new arrival with no friendly air. "Won't have her round under *my* feet, *I* know!"

"Pah!" said Rosa and Jane, with supreme disgust; "let her keep out of our way! What in the world mas'r wanted another of these low niggers for, I can't see!"

"You go 'long! No more nigger dan you be, Miss Rosa," said Dinah, who felt this last remark a reflection on herself. "You seem to tink yourself white folks. You an't nery one, black *nor* white. I'd like to be one or turrer."

Miss Ophelia saw that there was nobody in the camp that would undertake to oversee the cleansing and dressing of the new arrival: and so she was forced to do it herself, with some very ungracious and reluctant assistance from Jane.

It is not for ears polite to hear the particulars of the first toilet of a neglected, abused child. In fact, in this world, multitudes must live and die in a state that it would be too great a shock to the nerves of their fellow-mortals even to hear described. Miss Ophelia had a good, strong, practical deal of resolution; and she went through all the disgusting details with heroic thoroughness, though, it must be confessed, with no very gracious air—for endurance was the utmost to which her principles could bring her. When she saw, on the back and shoulders of the child, great welts and calloused spots, ineffaceable marks of the system under which she had grown up thus far, her heart became pitiful within her.

"See there!" said Jane, pointing to the marks, "don't that show she's a limb? We'll have fine works with her, I reckon. I hate these nigger young uns! so disgusting! I wonder that mas'r would buy her!"

The "young un" alluded to heard all these comments with the subdued and doleful air which seemed habitual to her, only scanning, with a keen and furtive glance of her flickering eyes, the ornaments which Jane wore in her ears. When arrayed at last in a suit of decent and whole clothing, her hair cropped short to her head, Miss Ophelia, with some satisfaction, said she looked more Christian-like than

she did, and in her own mind began to mature some plans for her instruction.

Sitting down before her, she began to question her.

"How old are you, Topsy?"

"Dunno, Missis," said the image, with a grin that showed all her teeth.

"Don't know how old you are? Didn't anybody ever tell you? Who was your mother?"

"Never had none!" said the child, with another grin.

"Never had any mother? What do you mean? Where were you born?"

"Never was born!" persisted Topsy, with another grin, that looked so goblin-like that, if Miss Ophelia had been at all nervous, she might have fancied that she had got hold of some sooty gnome from the land of Diablerie; but Miss Ophelia was not nervous, but plain and business-like, and she said, with some sternness:

"You mustn't answer me in that way, child; I'm not playing with you. Tell me where you were born, and who your father and mother were."

"Never was born," reiterated the creature, more emphatically; "never had no father nor mother, nor nothin'. I was raised by a speculator, with lots of others. Old Aunt Sue used to take car on us."

The child was evidently sincere; and Jane, breaking into a short laugh, said:

"Laws, Missis, there's heaps of 'em. Speculators buys 'em up cheap, when they's little, and gets 'em raised for market."

"How long have you lived with your master and mistress?"

"Dunno, Missis."

"Is it a year, or more, or less?"

"Dunno, Missis."

"Laws, Missis, those low negroes—they can't tell; they don't know anything about time," said Jane; "they don't know what a year is; they don't know their own ages."

"Have you ever heard anything about God, Topsy?"

The child looked bewildered, but grinned as usual.

"Do you know who made you?"

"Nobody, as I knows on," said the child, with a short laugh.

The idea appeared to amuse her considerably; for her eyes twinkled, and she added:

"I spect I grow'd. Don't think nobody never made me."

"Do you know how to sew?" said Miss Ophelia, who thought she would turn her inquiries to something more tangible.

"No, Missis."

"What can you do? What did you do for your master and mistress?"

"Fetch water, and wash dishes, and rub knives, and wait on folks."

"Were they good to you?"

"Spect they was," said the child, scanning Miss Ophelia cunningly.

Miss Ophelia rose from this encouraging colloquy; St. Clare was leaning over the back of her chair.

"You find virgin soil there, cousin; put in your own ideas—you won't find many to pull up."

Miss Ophelia's ideas of education, like all her other ideas, were very set and definite; and of the kind that prevailed in New England a century ago, and which are still preserved in some very retired and unsophisticated parts, where there are no railroads. As nearly as could be expressed, they could be comprised in very few words; to teach them to mind when they were spoken to; to teach

them the catechism, sewing, and reading: and to whip them if they told lies. And though, of course, in the flood of light that is now poured on education, these are left far away in the rear, yet it is an undisputed fact that our grandmothers raised some tolerably fair men and women under this *régime*, as many of us can remember and testify. At all events, Miss Ophelia knew of nothing else to do; and, therefore, applied her mind to her heathen with the best diligence she could command.

The child was announced and considered in the family as Miss Ophelia's girl; and, as she was looked upon with no gracious eye in the kitchen, Miss Ophelia resolved to confine her sphere of operation and instruction chiefly to her own chamber. With a self-sacrifice which some of our readers will appreciate, she resolved, instead of comfortably making her own bed, sweeping and dusting her own chamber—which she had hitherto done, in utter scorn of all offers of help from the chambermaid of the establishment—to condemn herself to the martyrdom of instructing Topsy to perform these operations—ah, woe the day! Did any of our readers ever do the same they will appreciate the amount of her self-sacrifice.

Miss Ophelia began with Topsy by taking her into her chamber, the first morning, and solemnly commencing a course of instruction in the art and mystery of bed-making.

Behold, then, Topsy washed and shorn of all the little braided tails wherein her heart had delighted, arrayed in a clean gown, with well-starched apron, standing reverently before Miss Ophelia, with an expression of solemnity well befitting a funeral.

"Now, Topsy, I'm going to show you just how my bed is to be made. I am very particular about my bed. You must learn exactly how to do it."

"Yes, ma'am," says Topsy, with a deep sigh and a face of woful earnestness.

"Now, Topsy, look here—this is the hem of the sheet—this is the right side of the sheet, and this is the wrong—will you remember?"

"Yes, ma'am," says Topsy, with another sigh.

"Well, now, the under sheet you must bring over the bolster—so—and tuck it clear down under the mattress nice and smooth—so—do you see?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Topsy, with profound attention.

"But the upper sheet," said Miss Ophelia, "must be brought down in this way and tucked under firm and smooth at the foot—so—the narrow hem at the foot."

"Yes, ma'am," said Topsy, as before; but we will add, what Miss Ophelia did not see, that, during the time when the good lady's back was turned, in the zeal of her manipulations, the young disciple had contrived to snatch a pair of gloves and a ribbon, which she had adroitly slipped into her sleeves, and stood with her hands dutifully folded, as before.

"Now, Topsy, let's see *you* do this," said Miss Ophelia, pulling off the clothes and seating herself.

Topsy, with great gravity and adroitness, went through the exercise completely to Miss Ophelia's satisfaction; smoothing the sheets, patting out every wrinkle, and exhibiting, through the whole process, a gravity and seriousness with which her instructress was greatly edified. By an unlucky slip, however, a fluttering fragment of the ribbon hung out of one of her sleeves, just as she was finishing, and caught Miss Ophelia's attention. Instantly she pounced upon it. "What's this? You naughty, wicked child—you've been stealing this!"

The ribbon was pulled out of Topsy's own sleeve, yet was she not in the least disconcerted; she only looked at it

with an air of the most surprised and unconscious innocence.

"Laws! why, that ar 's Miss Feely's ribbon, an't it? How could it 'a' got caught in my sleeve?"

"Topsy, you naughty girl, don't you tell me a lie—you stole that ribbon!"

"Missis, I declar for 't, I didn't—never seed it till dis yer blessed minnit."

"Topsy," said Miss Ophelia, "don't you know it's wicked to tell lies?"

"I never tells no lies, Miss Feely," said Topsy, with virtuous gravity; "it's jist the truth I've been a-tellin' now, and an't nothin' else."

"Topsy, I shall have to whip you, if you tell lies so."

"Laws, Missis, if you's to whip all day, couldn't say no other way," said Topsy, beginning to blubber. "I never seed dat ar—it must a got caught in my sleeve. Miss Feely must have left it on the bed, and it got caught in the clothes, and so got in my sleeve."

Miss Ophelia was so indignant at the barefaced lie, that she caught the child and shook her.

"Don't you tell me that again!"

The shake brought the gloves on the floor from the other sleeve.

"There, you!" said Miss Ophelia, "will you tell me now, you didn't steal the ribbon?"

Topsy now confessed to the gloves, but still persisted in denying the ribbon.

"Now, Topsy," said Miss Ophelia, "if you'll confess all about it I won't whip you this time."

Thus adjured, Topsy confessed to the ribbon and gloves with woful protestations of penitence.

"Well now, tell me. I know you must have taken other things since you have been in the house, for I let you run

about all day yesterday. Now, tell me if you took anything, and I sha'n't whip you."

"Laws, Missis! I took Miss Eva's red thing she wars on her neck."

"You did, you naughty child! Well, what else?"

"I took Rosa's yer-rings—them red ones."

"Go bring them to me this minute, both of 'em."

"Laws, Missis! I can't—they's burned up!"

"Burned up! What a story! Go get 'em, or I'll whip you."

Topsy, with loud protestations, and tears, and groans, declared that she *could* not. "They's burned up—they was."

"What did you burn 'em up for?" said Miss Ophelia.

"'Cause I's wicked—I is. I's mighty wicked, anyhow. I can't help it."

Just at this moment Eva came innocently into the room with the identical coral necklace on her neck.

"Why, Eva, where did you get your necklace?" said Miss Ophelia.

"Get it? Why, I've had it on all day," said Eva.

"Did you have it on yesterday?"

"Yes; and what is funny, aunty, I had it on all night. I forgot to take it off when I went to bed."

Miss Ophelia looked perfectly bewildered; the more so as Rosa, at that instant, came into the room with a basket of newly ironed linen poised on her head and the coral eardrops shaking in her ears!

"I'm sure I can't tell anything what to do with such a child!" she said, in despair. "What in the world did you tell me you took those things for, Topsy?"

"Why, Missis said I must 'fess; and I couldn't think of nothin' else to 'fess," said Topsy, rubbing her eyes.

"But, of course, I didn't want you to confess things you

didn't do," said Miss Ophelia; "that's telling a lie just as much as the other."

"Laws, now, is it?" said Topsy, with an air of innocent wonder.

"La, there an't any such thing as truth in that limb," said Rosa, looking indignantly at Topsy. "If I was Mas'r St. Clare, I'd whip her till the blood run. I would—I'd let her catch it."

"No, no, Rosa," said Eva, with an air of command, which the child could assume at times; "you mustn't talk so, Rosa. I can't bear to hear it."

"La sakes! Miss Eva, you's so good, you don't know nothing how to get along with niggers. There's no way but to cut 'em well up, I tell ye."

"Rosa!" said Eva, "hush! Don't you say another word of that sort!" And the eye of the child flashed, and her cheek deepened its color.

Rosa was cowed in a moment.

"Miss Eva has got the St. Clare blood in her, that's plain. She can speak for all the world just like her papa," she said, as she passed out of the room.

Eva stood looking at Topsy.

There stood the two children, representatives of the two extremes of society. The fair, high-bred child, with her golden head, her deep eyes, her spiritual, noble brow, and prince-like movements; and her black, keen, subtle, cringing, yet acute neighbor. They stood the representatives of their races. The Saxon, born of ages of cultivation, command, education, physical and moral eminence; the Afric, born of ages of oppression, submission, ignorance, toil, and vice!

Something, perhaps, of such thoughts struggled through Eva's mind. But a child's thoughts are rather dim, undefined instincts; and in Eva's noble nature many such were yearning and working, for which she had no power of

utterance. When Miss Ophelia expatiated on Topsy's naughty, wicked conduct, the child looked perplexed and sorrowful, but said, sweetly:

"Poor Topsy, why need you steal? You're going to be taken good care of now. I'm sure I'd rather give you anything of mine, than have you steal it."

It was the first word of kindness the child had ever heard in her life; and the sweet tone and manner struck strangely on the wild, rude heart, and a sparkle of something like a tear shone in the keen, round, glittering eye; but it was followed by the short laugh and habitual grin. No! the ear that has never heard anything but abuse is strangely incredulous of anything so heavenly as kindness; and Topsy only thought Eva's speech something funny and inexplicable—she did not believe it.

But what was to be done with Topsy? Miss Ophelia found the case a puzzler; her rules for bringing up didn't seem to apply. She thought she would take time to think of it; and by the way of gaining time, and in hopes of some indefinite moral virtues supposed to be inherent in dark closets, Miss Ophelia shut Topsy up in one till she had arranged her ideas further on the subject.

"I don't see," said Miss Ophelia to St. Clare, "how I'm going to manage that child without whipping her."

"Well, whip her, then, to your heart's content; I'll give you full power to do what you like."

"Children always have to be whipped," said Miss Ophelia; "I never heard of bringing them up without."

"Oh, well, certainly," said St. Clare; "do as you think best. Only, I'll make one suggestion: I've seen this child whipped with a poker, knocked down with the shovel or tongs, whichever came handiest; and, seeing that she is used to that style of operation, I think your whippings will have to be pretty energetic to make much impression."

"What is to be done with her, then?" said Miss Ophelia.

"You have started a serious question," said St. Clare. "I wish you'd answer it. What is to be done with a human being that can be governed only by the lash?—*that* fails—it's a very common state of things down here!"

"I'm sure I don't know; I never saw such a child as this."

"Such children are very common among us, and such men and women, too. How are they to be governed?" said St. Clare.

"I'm sure it's more than I can say," said Miss Ophelia.

"Or I either," said St. Clare. "The horrid cruelties and outrages that once in awhile find their way into the papers —such cases as Prue's, for example—what do they come from? In many cases it is a gradual hardening process on both sides—the owner growing more and more cruel, and the servant more and more callous. Whipping and abuse are like laudanum; you have to double the dose as the sensibilities decline. I saw this very early when I became an owner; and I resolved never to begin, because I did not know when I should stop—and I resolved, at least, to protect my own moral nature. The consequence is, that my servants act like spoiled children; but I think that better than for us both to be brutalized together. You have talked a great deal about our responsibilities in educating, cousin. I really wanted you to *try* with one child, who is a specimen of thousands among us."

"It is your system makes such children," said Miss Ophelia.

"I know it; but they are *made*—they exist—and what *is* to be done with them?"

"Well, I can't say I thank you for the experiment. But, then, as it appears to be a duty, I shall persevere and try, and do the best I can," said Miss Ophelia; and Miss

Ophelia, after this, did labor with a commendable degree of zeal and energy on her new subject. She instituted regular hours and employments for her, and undertook to teach her to read and to sew.

In the former art the child was quick enough. She learned her letters as if by magic, and was very soon able to read plain reading; but the sewing was a more difficult matter. The creature was as lithe as a cat, and as active as a monkey, and the confinement of sewing was her abomination; so she broke her needles, threw them slyly out of windows, or down in chinks of the walls; she tangled, broke, and dirtied her thread, or, with a sly movement, would throw a spool away altogether. Her motions were almost as quick as those of a practised conjurer, and her command of her face quite as great; and though Miss Ophelia could not help feeling that so many accidents could not possibly happen in succession, yet she could not, without a watchfulness which would leave her no time for anything else, detect her.

Topsy was soon a noted character in the establishment. Her talent for every species of drollery, grimace, and mimicry —for dancing, tumbling, climbing, singing, whistling, imitating every sound that hit her fancy—seemed inexhaustible. In her play-hours she invariably had every child in the establishment at her heels, open-mouthed with admiration and wonder—not excepting Miss Eva, who appeared to be fascinated by her wild diablerie, as a dove is sometimes charmed by a glittering serpent. Miss Ophelia was uneasy that Eva should fancy Topsy's society so much, and implored St. Clare to forbid it.

"Poh! let the child alone," said St. Clare. "Topsy will do her good."

"But so depraved a child—are you not afraid she will teach her some mischief?"

"She can't teach her mischief; she might teach it to some children, but evil rolls off Eva's mind like dew off a cabbage-leaf—not a drop sinks in."

"Don't be too sure," said Miss Ophelia. "I know I'd never let a child of mine play with Topsy."

"Well, your children needn't," said St. Clare, "but mine may; if Eva could have been spoiled it would have been done years ago."

Topsy was at first despised and contemned by the upper servants. They soon found reason to alter their opinion. It was very soon discovered that whoever cast an indignity on Topsy was sure to meet with some inconvenient accident shortly after—either a pair of earrings or some cherished trinket would be missing, or an article of dress would be suddenly found utterly ruined, or the person would stumble accidentally into a pail of hot water, or a libation of dirty slop would unaccountably deluge them from above when in full gala dress—and on all these occasions, when investigation was made, there was nobody found to stand sponsor for the indignity. Topsy was cited, and had up before all the domestic judicatories, time and again; but always sustained her examinations with most edifying innocence and gravity of appearance. Nobody in the world ever doubted who did the things; but not a scrap of any direct evidence could be found to establish the suppositions, and Miss Ophelia was too just to feel at liberty to proceed to any length without it.

The mischiefs done were always so nicely timed, also, as further to shelter the aggressor. Thus, the times for revenge on Rosa and Jane, the two chambermaids, were always chosen in those seasons when (as not unfrequently happened) they were in disgrace with their mistress, when any complaint from them would, of course, meet with no sympathy. In short, Topsy soon made the household un-

derstand the propriety of letting her alone; and she was let alone accordingly.

Topsy was smart and energetic in all manual operations, learning everything that was taught her with surprising quickness. With a few lessons she had learned to do the proprieties of Miss Ophelia's chamber in a way with which even that particular lady could find no fault. Mortal hands could not lay spread smoother, adjust pillows more accurately, sweep and dust and arrange more perfectly, than Topsy when she chose—but she didn't very often choose. If Miss Ophelia, after three or four days of careful and patient supervision, was so sanguine as to suppose that Topsy had at last fallen into her way, could do without overlooking, and so go off and busy herself about something else, Topsy would hold a perfect carnival of confusion, for some one or two hours. Instead of making the bed, she would amuse herself with pulling off the pillow-cases, butting her woolly head among the pillows, till it would sometimes be grotesquely ornamented with feathers sticking out in various directions; she would climb the posts and hang head downward from the tops; flourish the sheets and spreads all over the apartment; dress the bolster up in Miss Ophelia's night-clothes, and enact various scenic performances with that—singing and whistling, and making grimaces at herself in the looking-glass; in short, as Miss Ophelia phrased it, "raising Cain" generally.

On one occasion Miss Ophelia found Topsy with her very best scarlet India Canton crape shawl wound around her head for a turban, going on with her rehearsals before the glass in great style—Miss Ophelia having, with carelessness most unheard of in her, left the key for once in her drawer.

"Topsy!" she would say, when at the end of all patience, "what does make you act so?"

"Dunno, Missis—I spects 'cause I's so wicked!"

"I don't know anything what I shall do with you, Topsy."

"Law, Missis, you must whip me; my old missis allers whipped me. I an't used to workin' unless I gets whipped."

"Why, Topsy, I don't want to whip you. You can do well if you've a mind to; what is the reason you won't?"

"Laws, Missis, I's used to whippin'; I spects it's good for me."

Miss Ophelia tried the recipe, and Topsy invariably made a terrible commotion, screaming, groaning, and imploring, though half an hour afterward, when roosted on some projection of the balcony, and surrounded by a flock of admiring "young uns," she would express the utmost contempt for the whole affair.

"Law, Miss Feely whip! Wouldn't kill a skeeter, her whippin's. Oughter see how old mas'r made the flesh fly; old mas'r know'd how!"

Topsy always made great capital of her own sins and enormities, evidently considering them as something peculiarly distinguishing.

"Law, you niggers," she would say to some of her auditors, "does you know you's all sinners? Well, you is—everybody is. White folks is sinners too—Miss Feely says so; but I spects niggers is the biggest ones; but lor! ye an't any on ye up to me. I's so awful wicked there can't nobody do nothin' with me. I used to keep old missis a swarin' at me half de time. I spects I's the wickedest crittur in the world"; and Topsy would cut a somerset, and come up brisk and shining on to a higher perch, and evidently plume herself on the distinction.

Miss Ophelia busied herself very earnestly on Sundays teaching Topsy the catechism. Topsy had an uncommon verbal memory, and committed with a fluency that greatly encouraged her instructress.

"What good do you expect it is going to do her?" said St. Clare.

"Why, it always has done children good. It's what children always have to learn, you know," said Miss Ophelia.

"Understand it or not," said St. Clare.

"Oh, children never understand it at the time; but, after they are grown up, it 'll come to them."

"Mine hasn't come to me yet," said St. Clare, "though I'll bear testimony that you put it into me pretty thoroughly when I was a boy."

"Ah, you were always good at learning, Augustine. I used to have great hopes of you," said Miss Ophelia.

"Well, haven't you now?" said St. Clare.

"I wish you were as good as you were when you were a boy, Augustine."

"So do I, that's a fact, cousin," said St. Clare. "Well, go ahead and catechize Topsy; maybe you'll make out something yet."

Topsy, who had stood like a black statue during this discussion, with hands decently folded, now, at a signal from Miss Ophelia, went on:

"Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created."

Topsy's eyes twinkled, and she looked inquiringly.

"What is it, Topsy?" said Miss Ophelia.

"Please, Missis, was dat ar state Kintuck?"

"What state, Topsy?"

"Dat state dey fell out of. I used to hear mas'r tell how we came down from Kintuck."

St. Clare laughed.

"You'll have to give her a meaning, or she'll make one," said he. "There seems to be a theory of emigration suggested there."

"Oh, Augustine, be still," said Miss Ophelia; "how can I do anything if you will be laughing?"

"Well, I won't disturb the exercises again, on my honor." And St. Clare took his paper into the parlor and sat down till Topsy had finished her recitations. They were all very well, only that now and then she would oddly transpose some important words, and persist in the mistake, in spite of every effort to the contrary; and St. Clare, after all his promises of goodness, took a wicked pleasure in these mistakes, calling Topsy to him whenever he had a mind to amuse himself, and getting her to repeat the offending passages in spite of Miss Ophelia's remonstrances.

"How do you think I can do anything with the child, if you will go on so, Augustine?" she would say.

"Well, it is too bad—I won't again; but I do like to hear the droll little image stumble over those big words!"

"But you confirm her in the wrong way."

"What's the odds? One word is as good as another to her."

"You wanted me to bring her up right; and you ought to remember she is a reasonable creature, and be careful of your influence over her."

"Oh, dismal! so I ought; but, as Topsy herself says, 'I's so wicked!' "

In very much this way Topsy's training proceeded for a year or two, Miss Ophelia worrying herself from day to day with her as a kind of chronic plague, to whose infliction she became, in time, as accustomed as persons sometimes do to the neuralgia or sick-headache.

St. Clare took the same kind of amusement in the child that a man might in the tricks of a parrot or a pointer. Topsy, whenever her sins brought her into disgrace in other quarters, always took refuge behind his chair; and St. Clare, in one way or other, would make peace for her.

From him she got many a stray picayune, which she laid out in nuts and candies, and distributed, with careless generosity, to all the children in the family; for Topsy, to do her justice, was good-natured and liberal, and only spiteful in self-defence.

## Pip Meets an Escaped Convict[1]

*Charles Dickens* (1812–1870)

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the authority of his tombstone and my sister—Mrs. Joe Gargery, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, "*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above*," I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine—who gave up trying to get a living exceedingly early in that universal struggle—I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their

[1] From *Great Expectations.*

trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence.

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon toward evening. At such a time I found out for certain that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.

"Hold your noise!" cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. "Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!"

A fearful man, all in coarse gray, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smoothed in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briers; who limped, and shivered, and glared, and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.

"Oh! Don't cut my throat, sir," I pleaded in terror. "Pray don't do it, sir."

"Tell us your name!" said the man. "Quick!"

"Pip, sir."

"Once more," said the man, staring at me. "Give it mouth!"

"Pip. Pip, sir."

"Show us where you live," said the man. "Pint out the place!"

I pointed to where our village lay, on the flat in-shore among the alder-trees and pollards, a mile or more from the church.

The man, after looking at me for a moment, turned me upside down, and emptied my pockets. There was nothing in them but a piece of bread. When the church came to itself —for he was so sudden and strong that he made it go head over heels before me, and I saw the steeple under my feet —when the church came to itself, I say, I was seated on a high tombstone, trembling, while he ate the bread ravenously.

"You young dog," said the man, licking his lips, "what fat cheeks you ha' got."

I believe they were fat, though I was at that time undersized, for my years, and not strong.

"Darn me if I couldn't eat 'em," said the man, with a threatening shake of his head, "and if I han't half a mind to't!"

I earnestly expressed my hope that he wouldn't, and held tighter to the tombstone on which he had put me; partly, to keep myself upon it; partly, to keep myself from crying.

"Now lookee here!" said the man. "Where's your mother?"

"There, sir!" said I.

He started, made a short run, and stopped and looked over his shoulder.

"There, sir!" I timidly explained "Also Georgiana. That's my mother."

"Oh!" said he, coming back. "And is that your father alonger your mother?"

"Yes, sir," said I; "him too; late of this parish."

"Ha!" he muttered then, considering. "Who d'ye live with—supposin' you're kindly let to live, which I han't made up my mind about?"

"My sister, sir—Mrs. Joe Gargery—wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir."

"Blacksmith, eh?" said he. And looked down at his leg.

After darkly looking at his leg and at me several times, he came closer to my tombstone, took me by both arms, and tilted me back as far as he could hold me; so that his eyes looked most powerfully down into mine, and mine looked most helplessly up into his.

"Now lookee here," he said, "the question being whether you're to be let to live. You know what a file is?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you know what wittles is?"

"Yes, sir."

After each question he tilted me over a little more, so as to give me a greater sense of helplessness and danger.

"You get me a file." He tilted me again. "And you get me wittles." He tilted me again. "You bring 'em both to me." He tilted me again. "Or I'll have your heart and liver out." He tilted me again.

I was dreadfully frightened, and so giddy that I clung to him with both hands, and said, "If you would kindly please to let me keep upright, sir, perhaps I shouldn't be sick, and perhaps I could attend more."

He gave me a most tremendous dip and roll, so that the church jumped over its own weather-cock. Then, he held me by the arms in an upright position on the top of the stone, and went on in these fearful terms:

"You bring me, to-morrow morning early, that file and

them wittles. You bring the lot to me, at that old Battery over yonder. You do it, and you never dare to say a word or dare to make a sign concerning your having seen such a person as me, or any person sumever, and you shall be let to live. You fail, or you go from my words in any partickler, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, roasted, and ate. Now, I ain't alone, as you may think I am. There's a young man hid with me, in comparison with which young man I am a angel. That young man hears the words I speak. That young man has a secret way pecooliar to himself, of getting at a boy, and at his heart, and at his liver. It is in wain for a boy to attempt to hide himself from that young man. A boy may lock his door, may be warm in bed, may tuck himself up, may draw the clothes over his head, may think himself comfortable and safe, but that young man will softly creep and creep his way to him and tear him open. I am keeping that young man from harming of you at the present moment, with great difficulty. I find it wery hard to hold that young man off of your inside. Now, what do you say?"

I said that I would get him the file, and I would get him what broken bits of food I could, and I would come to him at the Battery, early in the morning.

"Say, Lord strike you dead if you don't!" said the man.

I said so, and he took me down.

"Now," he pursued, "you remember what you've undertook, and you remember that young man, and you get home!"

"Goo-good-night, sir," I faltered.

"Much of that!" said he, glancing about him over the cold wet flat. "I wish I was a frog. Or a eel!"

At the same time, he hugged his shuddering body in both his arms—clasping himself as if to hold himself together—and limped toward the low church wall. As I saw him go,

picking his way among the nettles, and among the brambles that bound the green mounds, he looked in my young eyes as if he were eluding the hands of the dead people stretching up cautiously out of their graves, to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in.

When he came to the low church wall, he got over it like a man whose legs were numbed and stiff, and then turned round to look for me. When I saw him turning I set my face toward home, and made the best use of my legs. But presently I looked over my shoulder and saw him going on again toward the river, still hugging himself in both arms, and picking his way with his sore feet among the great stones dropped into the marshes here and there, for stepping-places when the rains were heavy, or the tide was in.

The marshes were just a long, black, horizontal line then, as I stopped to look after him; and the river was just another horizontal line, not nearly so broad, nor yet so black; and the sky was just a row of long, angry, red lines, and dense black lines intermixed. On the edge of the river I could faintly make out the only two black things in all the prospect that seemed to be standing upright; one of these was the beacon by which the sailors steered—like an unhooped cask upon a pole—an ugly thing when you were near it; the other a gibbet, with some chains hanging to it, which had once held a pirate. The man was limping on toward this latter as if he were the pirate come to life, and come down, and going back to hook himself up again. It gave me a terrible turn when I thought so; and as I saw the cattle lifting their heads to gaze after him I wondered whether they thought so, too. I looked all round for the horrible young man, and could see no signs of him. But now I was frightened again, and ran home without stopping.

## Nicholas Varies the Monotony[1]

*Charles Dickens* (1812–1870)

[Smike, the drudge of Dotheboys Hall, has run away, but is captured and brought back.]

Another day came, and Nicholas was scarcely awake when he heard the wheels of a chaise approaching the house. It stopped. The voice of Mrs. Squeers was heard, and in exultation, ordering a glass of spirits for somebody, which was in itself a sufficient sign that something extraordinary had happened. Nicholas hardly dared to look out of the window; but he did so, and the very first object that met his eyes was the wretched Smike; so bedabbled with mud and rain, so haggard and worn, and wild, that, but for his garments being such as no scarecrow was ever seen to wear, he might have been doubtful, even then, of his identity.

"Lift him out," said Squeers, after he had literally feasted his eyes, in silence, upon the culprit. "Bring him in; bring him in!"

"Take care," cried Mrs. Squeers, as her husband proffered his assistance. "We tied his legs under the apron and made 'em fast to the chaise, to prevent his giving us the slip again."

With hands trembling with delight, Squeers unloosened the cord; and Smike, to all appearance more dead than alive, was brought into the house and securely locked up in a cellar, until such time as Mr. Squeers should deem it expedient to operate upon him, in presence of the assembled school.

Upon a hasty consideration of the circumstances, it may

[1] From *Nicholas Nickleby.*

be matter of surprise to some persons, that Mr. and Mrs. Squeers should have taken so much trouble to repossess themselves of an incumbrance of which it was their wont to complain so loudly; but their surprise will cease when they are informed that the manifold services of the drudge, if performed by anybody else, would have cost the establishment some ten or twelve shillings per week in the shape of wages; and furthermore, that all runaways were, as a matter of policy, made severe examples of, at Dotheboys Hall, inasmuch as, in consequence of the limited extent of its attractions, there was but little inducement, beyond the powerful impulse of fear, for any pupil, provided with the usual number of legs and the power of using them, to remain.

The news that Smike had been caught and brought back in triumph ran like wildfire through the hungry community, and expectation was on tiptoe all the morning. On tiptoe it was destined to remain, however, until afternoon, when Squeers, having refreshed himself with his dinner, and further strengthened himself by an extra libation or so, made his appearance (accompanied by his amiable partner) with a countenance of portentous import, and a fearful instrument of flagellation, strong, supple, waxended, and new—in short, purchased that morning expressly for the occasion.

"Is every boy here?" asked Squeers, in a tremendous voice.

Every boy was there, but every boy was afraid to speak; so Squeers glared along the lines to assure himself; and every eye drooped, and every head cowered down as he did so.

"Each boy keep his place," said Squeers, administering his favourite blow to the desk, and regarding with gloomy satisfaction the universal start which it never failed to occasion. "Nickleby! to your desk, sir."

It was remarked by more than one small observer that there was a very curious and unusual expression in the usher's face; but he took his seat, without opening his lips in reply. Squeers, casting a triumphant glance at his assistant and a look of most comprehensive despotism on the boys, left the room, and shortly afterward returned, dragging Smike by the collar—or rather by that fragment of his jacket which was nearest the place where his collar would have been, had he boasted such a decoration.

In any other place the appearance of the wretched, jaded, spiritless object would have occasioned a murmur of compassion and remonstrance. It had some effect even there; for the lookers-on moved uneasily in their seats, and a few of the boldest ventured to steal looks at each other, expressive of indignation and pity.

They were lost on Squeers, however, whose gaze was fastened on the luckless Smike, as he inquired, according to custom in such cases, whether he had anything to say for himself.

"Nothing, I suppose?" said Squeers, with a diabolical grin.

Smike glanced round, and his eye rested, for an instant, on Nicholas, as if he had expected him to intercede; but his look was riveted on his desk.

"Have you anything to say?" demanded Squeers again, giving his right arm two or three flourishes to try its power and suppleness. "Stand a little out of the way, Mrs. Squeers, my dear; I've hardly got room enough."

"Spare me, sir!" cried Smike.

"Oh! that's all, is it?" said Squeers. "Yes, I'll flog you within an inch of your life, and spare you that."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Mrs. Squeers, "that's a good 'un!"

"I was driven to do it," said Smike, faintly, and casting another imploring look about him.

"Driven to do it, were you?" said Squeers. "Oh! it wasn't your fault; it was mine, I suppose—eh?"

"A nasty, ungrateful, pig-headed, brutish, obstinate, sneaking dog," exclaimed Mrs. Squeers, taking Smike's head under her arm, and administering a cuff at every epithet; "what does he mean by that?"

"Stand aside, my dear," replied Squeers. "We'll try and find out."

Mrs. Squeers, being out of breath with her exertions, complied. Squeers caught the boy firmly in his grip; one desperate cut had fallen on his body—he was wincing from the lash and uttering a scream of pain—it was raised again, and again about to fall—when Nicholas Nickleby suddenly starting up, cried "Stop!" in a voice that made the rafters ring.

"Who cried stop?" said Squeers, turning savagely round.

"I," said Nicholas, stepping forward. "This must not go on."

"Must not go on!" cried Squeers, almost in a shriek.

"No!" thundered Nicholas.

Aghast and stupefied by the boldness of the interference, Squeers released his hold of Smike, and, falling back a pace or two, gazed upon Nicholas with looks that were positively frightful.

"I say must not," repeated Nicholas, nothing daunted; "shall not. I will prevent it."

Squeers continued to gaze upon him, with his eyes starting out of his head; but astonishment had actually, for the moment, bereft him of speech.

"You have disregarded all my quiet interference in the miserable lad's behalf," said Nicholas; "you have returned no answer to the letter in which I begged forgiveness for him, and offered to be responsible that he would remain quietly here. Don't blame me for this public interference. You have brought it upon yourself; not I."

"Sit down, beggar!" screamed Squeers, almost beside himself with rage, and seizing Smike as he spoke.

"Wretch," rejoined Nicholas, fiercely, "touch him at your peril! I will not stand by and see it done. My blood is up, and I have the strength of ten such men as you. Look to yourself, for by Heaven I will not spare you if you drive me on!"

"Stand back," cried Squeers, brandishing his weapon.

"I have a long series of insults to avenge," said Nicholas, flushed with passion; "and my indignation is aggravated by the dastardly cruelties practised on helpless infancy in this foul den. Have a care; for if you do raise the devil within me, the consequences shall fall heavily upon your own head!"

He had scarcely spoken, when Squeers, in a violent outbreak of wrath, and with a cry like the howl of a wild beast, spat upon him, and struck him a blow across the face with his instrument of torture, which raised up a bar of livid flesh as it was inflicted. Smarting with the agony of the blow, and concentrating into that one moment all his feelings of rage, scorn, and indignation, Nicholas sprang upon him, wrested the weapon from his hand, and, pinning him by the throat, beat the ruffian till he roared for mercy.

The boys—with the exception of Master Squeers, who, coming to his father's assistance, harassed the enemy in the rear—moved not, hand or foot; but Mrs. Squeers, with many shrieks for aid, hung on to the tail of her partner's coat and endeavoured to drag him from his infuriated adversary; while Miss Squeers, who had been peeping through the keyhole in expectation of a very different scene, darted in at the very beginning of the attack and, after launching a shower of inkstands at the usher's head, beat Nicholas to her heart's content: animating herself at every blow, with the recollection of his having refused her proffered love,

and thus imparting additional strength to an arm which (as she took after her mother in this respect) was at no time one of the weakest.

Nicholas, in the full torrent of his violence, felt the blows no more than if they had been dealt with feathers; but, becoming tired of the noise and uproar and feeling that his arm grew weak besides, he threw all his remaining strength into half a dozen finishing cuts, and flung Squeers from him with all the force he could muster. The violence of his fall precipitated Mrs. Squeers completely over an adjacent form; and Squeers, striking his head against it in his descent, lay at his full length on the ground, stunned and motionless.

Having brought affairs to this happy termination, and ascertained, to his thorough satisfaction, that Squeers was only stunned, and not dead (upon which point he had had some unpleasant doubts at first), Nicholas left his family to restore him, and retired to consider what course he had better adopt. He looked anxiously round for Smike as he left the room, but he was nowhere to be seen.

After a brief consideration he packed up a few clothes in a small leathern valise, and, finding that nobody offered to oppose his progress, marched boldly out by the front door, and, shortly afterward, struck into the road which led to Greta Bridge.

## The Exposure of Jane Eyre[1]

*Charlotte Brontë* (1816–1855)

[Jane Eyre has been sent to Lowood, a charity school of which Mr. Brocklehurst is the patron, by her aunt, Mrs. Reed. Before sending her, Mrs. Reed has warned Mr. Brocklehurst to watch her carefully because she is deceitful.]

[1] From *Jane Eyre*.

One afternoon (I had then been three weeks at Lowood), as I was sitting with a slate in my hand, puzzling over a sum in long division, my eyes, raised in abstraction to the window, caught sight of a figure just passing: I recognized almost instinctively that gaunt outline; and when two minutes after, all the school, teachers included, rose *en masse*, it was not necessary for me to look up in order to ascertain whose entrance they thus greeted. A long stride measured the school-room, and presently beside Miss Temple, who herself had risen, stood the same black column which had frowned on me so ominously from the hearth-rug of Gateshead. I now glanced sideways at this piece of architecture. Yes, I was right: it was Mr. Brocklehurst, buttoned up in a surtout, and looking longer, narrower, and more rigid than ever.

I had my own reasons for being dismayed at this apparition: too well I remembered the perfidious hints given by Mrs. Reed about my disposition, etc.; the promise pledged by Mr. Brocklehurst to apprise Miss Temple and the teachers of my vicious nature. All along I had been dreading the fulfilment of this promise—I had been looking out daily for the "Coming Man," whose information respecting my past life and conversation was to brand me as a bad child forever: now there he was. He stood at Miss Temple's side; he was speaking low in her ear: I did not doubt he was making disclosures of my villainy; and I watched her eye with painful anxiety, expecting every moment to see its dark orb turn on me a glance of repugnance and contempt. I listened too; and as I happened to be seated quite at the top of the room, I caught most of what he said: its import relieved me from immediate apprehension.

"I suppose, Miss Temple, the thread I bought at Lowton will do; it struck me that it would be just of the quality for the calico chemises, and I sorted the needles to match.

You may tell Miss Smith that I forgot to make a memorandum of the darning needles, but she shall have some papers sent in next week; and she is not, on any account, to give out more than one at a time to each pupil: if they have more, they are apt to be careless and lose them. And, oh ma'am! I wish the woollen stockings were better looked to! —when I was here last I went into the kitchen-garden and examined the clothes drying on the line; there was a quantity of black hose in a very bad state of repair: from the size of the holes in them I was sure they had not been well mended from time to time."

He paused.

"Your directions shall be attended to, sir," said Miss Temple.

"And, ma'am," he continued, "the laundress tells me some of the girls have two clean tuckers in the week: it is too much; the rules limit them to one."

"I think I can explain that circumstance, sir. Agnes and Catherine Johnstone were invited to take tea with some friends at Lowton last Thursday, and I gave them leave to put on clean tuckers for the occasion."

Mr. Brocklehurst nodded.

"Well, for once it may pass; but please not to let the circumstance occur too often. And there is another thing which surprised me: I find, in settling accounts with the housekeeper, that a lunch, consisting of bread and cheese, has twice been served out to the girls during the past fortnight. How is this? I look over the regulations, and I find no such meal as lunch mentioned. Who introduced this innovation? and by what authority?"

"I must be responsible for the circumstance, sir," replied Miss Temple: "the breakfast was so ill-prepared that the pupils could not possibly eat it; and I dared not allow them to remain fasting till dinner-time."

"Madam, allow me an instant. You are aware that my plan in bringing up these girls is, not to accustom them to habits of luxury and indulgence, but to render them hardy, patient, self-denying. Should any little accidental disappointment of the appetite occur, such as the spoiling of a meal, the under or the over dressing of a dish, the incident ought not to be neutralized by replacing with something more delicate the comfort lost, thus pampering the body and obviating the aim of this institution; it ought to be improved to the spiritual edification of the pupils, by encouraging them to evince fortitude under the temporary privation. A brief address on those occasions would not be mistimed, wherein a judicious instructor would take the opportunity of referring to the sufferings of the primitive Christians; to the torments of martyrs; to the exhortations of our blessed Lord himself, calling upon his disciples to take up their cross and follow him; to his warnings that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; to his divine consolations, 'If ye suffer hunger or thirst for my sake, happy are ye.' Oh, madam, when you put bread and cheese, instead of burnt porridge, into these children's mouths, you may indeed feed their vile bodies, but you little think how you starve their immortal souls!"

Mr. Brocklehurst again paused—perhaps overcome by his feelings. Miss Temple had looked down when he first began to speak to her; but she now gazed straight before her, and her face, naturally pale as marble, appeared to be assuming also the coldness and fixity of that material; especially her mouth, closed as if it would have required a sculptor's chisel to open it, and her brow settled gradually into petrified severity.

Meantime, Mr. Brocklehurst, standing on the hearth with his hands behind his back, majestically surveyed the whole

school. Suddenly his eye gave a blink, as if it had met something that either dazzled or shocked its pupil; turning, he said in more rapid accents than he had hitherto used: "Miss Temple, Miss Temple, what—*what* is that girl with curled hair? Red hair, ma'am, curled—curled all over?" And extending his cane he pointed to the awful object, his hand shaking as he did so.

"It is Julia Severn," replied Miss Temple, very quietly.

"Julia Severn, ma'am! And why has she, or any other, curled hair? Why, in defiance of every precept and principle of this house, does she conform to the world so openly—here in an evangelical, charitable establishment—as to wear her hair one mass of curls?"

"Julia's hair curls naturally," returned Miss Temple, still more quietly.

"Naturally! Yes, but we are not to conform to nature: I wish these girls to be the children of Grace: and why that abundance? I have again and again intimated that I desire the hair to be arranged closely, modestly, plainly. Miss Temple, that girl's hair must be cut off entirely; I will send a barber to-morrow: and I see others who have far too much of the excrescence—that tall girl, tell her to turn round. Tell all the first form to rise up and direct their faces to the wall."

Miss Temple passed her handkerchief over her lips as if to smooth away the involuntary smile that curled them; she gave the order, however, and when the first class could take in what was required of them, they obeyed. Leaning a little back on my bench, I could see the looks and grimaces with which they commented on this manœuvre: it was a pity Mr. Brocklehurst could not see them, too; he would perhaps have felt that, whatever he might do with the outside of the cup and platter, the inside was farther beyond his interference than he imagined.

He scrutinized the reverse of these living medals some five minutes, then pronounced sentence. These words fell like the knell of doom: "All those top-knots must be cut off."

Miss Temple seemed to remonstrate.

"Madam," he pursued, "I have a master to serve whose kingdom is not of this world: my mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh; to teach them to clothe themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with braided hair and costly apparel; and each of the young persons before us has a string of hair twisted in plaits which vanity itself might have woven: these, I repeat, must be cut off; think of the time wasted, of—"

Mr. Brocklehurst was here interrupted: three other visitors, ladies, now entered the room. They ought to have come a little sooner to have heard his lecture on dress, for they were splendidly attired in velvet, silk, and furs. The two younger of the trio (fine girls of sixteen and seventeen) had gray beaver hats, then in fashion, shaded with ostrich plumes, and from under the brim of this graceful head-dress fell a profusion of light tresses, elaborately curled; the elder lady was enveloped in a costly velvet shawl, trimmed with ermine, and she wore a false front of French curls.

These ladies were deferentially received by Miss Temple, as Mrs. and the Misses Brocklehurst, and conducted to seats of honour at the top of the room. It seems they had come in the carriage with their reverend relative, and had been conducting a rummaging scrutiny of the rooms up-stairs while he transacted business with the housekeeper, questioned the laundress, and lectured the superintendent. They now proceeded to address divers remarks and reproofs to Miss Smith, who was charged with the care of the linen and the inspection of the dormitories: but I had no time to listen to what they said; other matters called off and enchained my attention.

Hitherto, while gathering up the discourse of Mr. Brocklehurst and Miss Temple, I had not, at the same time, neglected precautions to secure my personal safety, which I thought would be effected if I could only elude observation. To this end I had sat well back on the form, and, while seeming to be busy with my sum, had held my slate in such a manner as to conceal my face: I might have escaped notice had not my treacherous slate somehow happened to slip from my hand and, falling with an obtrusive crash, directly drawn every eye upon me; I knew it was all over now, and, as I stooped to pick up the two fragments of slate, I rallied my forces for the worst. It came.

"A careless girl!" said Mr. Brocklehurst, and immediately after: "It is the new pupil, I perceive." And before I could draw breath, "I must not forget I have a word to say respecting her." Then aloud —how loud it seemed to me! "Let the child who broke her slate come forward!"

Of my own accord I could not have stirred: I was paralyzed: but the two great girls who sat on each side of me set me on my legs and pushed me toward the dread judge, and then Miss Temple gently assisted me to his very feet, and I caught her whispered counsel, "Don't be afraid, Jane, I saw it was an accident; you shall not be punished."

The kind whisper went to my heart like a dagger.

"Another minute, and she will despise me for a hypocrite," thought I; and an impulse of fury against Reed, Brocklehurst & Co. bounded in my pulses at the conviction. I was no Helen Burns.

"Fetch that stool," said Mr. Brocklehurst, pointing to a very high one from which a monitor had just risen: it was brought.

"Place the child upon it."

And I was placed there, by whom I don't know—I was in no condition to note particulars: I was only aware that

they had hoisted me up to the height of Mr. Brocklehurst's nose, that he was within a yard of me, and that a spread of shot orange and purple silk pelisses, and a cloud of silvery plumage extended and waved below me.

Mr. Brocklehurst hemmed.

"Ladies," said he, turning to his family; "Miss Temple, teachers, and children, you all see this girl?"

Of course they did; for I felt their eyes directed like burning-glasses against my scorched skin.

"You see she is yet young; you observe she possesses the ordinary form of childhood; God has graciously given her the shape that he has given to all of us; no signal deformity points her out as a marked character. Who would think that the Evil One had already found a servant and agent in her? Yet such, I grieve to say, is the case."

A pause, in which I began to steady the palsy of my nerves, and to feel that the Rubicon was passed, and that the trial, no longer to be shirked, must be firmly sustained.

"My dear children," pursued the black-marble clergyman, with pathos, "this is a sad, a melancholy occasion, for it becomes my duty to warn you that this girl, who might be one of God's own lambs, is a little castaway: not a member of the true flock, but evidently an interloper and an alien. You must be on your guard against her; you must shun her example; if necessary, avoid her company, exclude her from your sports, and shut her out from your converse. Teachers, you must watch her—keep your eyes on her movements, weigh well her words, scrutinize her actions, punish her body to save her soul: if, indeed, such salvation be possible, for (my tongue falters while I tell it) this girl, this child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut—this girl is—a liar!"

Now came a pause of ten minutes, during which I, by

this time in perfect possession of my wits, observed all the female Brocklehursts produce their pocket-handkerchiefs and apply them to their optics, while the elderly lady swayed herself to and fro, and the two younger ones whispered, "How shocking!"

Mr. Brocklehurst resumed.

"This I learned from her benefactress; from the pious and charitable lady who adopted her in her orphan state, reared her as her own daughter, and whose kindness, whose generosity the unhappy girl repaid by an ingratitude so bad, so dreadful, that at last her excellent patroness was obliged to separate her from her own young ones, fearful lest her vicious example should contaminate their purity: she has sent her here to be healed, even as the Jews of old sent their diseased to the troubled pool of Bethesda; and, teachers, superintendent, I beg of you not to allow the waters to stagnate round her."

With this sublime conclusion, Mr. Brocklehurst adjusted the top button of his surtout, muttered something to his family, who rose, bowed to Miss Temple, and then all the great people sailed in state from the room. Turning at the door, my judge said: "Let her stand half an hour longer on that stool, and let no one speak to her during the remainder of the day."

## Childish Sorrows[1]

*George Eliot* (1819–1880)

[Tom Tulliver comes home from school. Maggie Tulliver has had particular instructions to feed his rabbits during his absence. She has forgotten to do so, and they are dead.]

[1] From *The Mill on the Floss.*

Tom was to arrive early in the afternoon, and there was another fluttering heart besides Maggie's when it was late enough for the sound of the gig-wheels to be expected; for if Mrs. Tulliver had a strong feeling, it was fondness for her boy. At last the sound came—the quick, light bowling of the gig-wheels—and in spite of the wind, which was blowing the clouds about, and was not likely to respect Mrs. Tulliver's curls and cap-strings, she came outside the door, and even held her hand on Maggie's offending head, forgetting all the griefs of the morning.

"There he is, my sweet lad! But Lord ha' mercy! he's got never a collar on; it's been lost on the road, I'll be bound, and spoilt the set."

Mrs. Tulliver stood with her arms open; Maggie jumped first on one leg and then on the other; while Tom descended from the gig, and said, with masculine reticence as to the tender emotions, "Hallo! Yap—what! are you there?"

Nevertheless, he submitted to be kissed willingly enough, though Maggie hung on his neck in rather a strangling fashion, while his blue-gray eyes wandered toward the croft, and the lambs, and the river, where he promised himself that he would begin to fish the first thing to-morrow morning. He was one of those lads that grow everywhere in England, and, at twelve or thirteen years of age, look as much alike as goslings—a lad with light-brown hair, cheeks of cream and roses, full lips, indeterminate nose and eyebrows—a physiognomy in which it seems impossible to discern anything but the generic character of boyhood; as different as possible from poor Maggie's phiz, which Nature seemed to have moulded and colored with the most decided intention. But that same Nature has the deep cunning which hides itself under the appearance of openness, so that simple people think they can see through her quite well, and all the while she is secretly preparing

a refutation of their confident prophecies. Under these average boyish physiognomies that she seems to turn off by the gross, she conceals some of her most rigid, inflexible purposes, some of her most unmodifiable characters; and the dark-eyed, demonstrative, rebellious girl may after all turn out to be a passive being compared with this pink and white bit of masculinity with the indeterminate features.

"Maggie," said Tom, confidentially, taking her into a corner as soon as his mother was gone out to examine his box, and the warm parlor had taken off the chill he had felt from the long drive, "you don't know what I've got in *my* pockets," nodding his head up and down as a means of rousing her sense of mystery.

"No," said Maggie. "How stodgy they look, Tom! Is it marls (marbles) or cobnuts?" Maggie's heart sank a little, because Tom always said it was "no good" playing with *her* at those games—she played so badly.

"Marls! no; I've swopped all my marls with the little fellows, and cobnuts are no fun, you silly, only when the nuts are green. But see here!" He drew something half out of his right-hand pocket.

"What is it?" said Maggie, in a whisper. "I can see nothing but a bit of yellow."

"Why, it's . . . a . . . new . . . guess, Maggie."

"Oh, I *can't* guess, Tom," said Maggie, impatiently.

"Don't be a spitfire, else I won't tell you," said Tom, thrusting his hand back into his pocket and looking determined.

"No, Tom," said Maggie, imploringly, laying hold of the arm that was held stiffly in the pocket. "I'm not cross, Tom; it was only because I can't bear guessing. *Please* be good to me."

Tom's arm slowly relaxed, and he said, "Well, then, it's a new fish-line—two new uns—one for you, Maggie, all to

yourself. I wouldn't go halves in the toffee and gingerbread on purpose to save the money; and Gibson and Spouncer fought with me because I wouldn't. And here's hooks—see here! . . . I say, *won't* we go an fish to-morrow down by Round Pool? And you shall catch your own fish, Maggie, and put the worms on, and everything: won't it be fun?"

Maggie's answer was to throw her arms around Tom's neck and hug him, and hold her cheek against his without speaking, while he slowly unwound some of the line, saying, after a pause:

"Wasn't I a good brother, now, to buy you a line all to yourself? You know, I needn't have bought it if I hadn't liked."

"Yes, very, very good . . . I *do* love you, Tom."

Tom had put the line back in his pocket, and was looking at the hooks one by one before he spoke again.

"And the fellows fought me because I wouldn't give in about the toffee."

"Oh dear! I wish they wouldn't fight at your school, Tom. Didn't it hurt you?"

"Hurt me? no," said Tom, putting up the hooks again, taking out a large pocket-knife, and slowly opening the largest blade, which he looked at meditatively as he rubbed his finger along it. Then he added:

"I gave Spouncer a black eye, I know—that's what he got by wanting to leather *me;* I wasn't going to go halves because anybody leathered me."

"Oh, how brave you are, Tom! I think you're like Samson. If there came a lion roaring at me, I think you'd fight him —wouldn't you, Tom?"

"How can a lion come roaring at you, you silly thing? There's no lions only in the shows."

"No; but if we were in the lion countries—I mean, in

Africa, where it's very hot—the lions eat people there. I can show it you in the book where I read it."

"Well, I should get a gun and shoot him."

"But if you hadn't got a gun—we might have gone out, you know, not thinking, just as we go fishing; and then a great lion might run toward us roaring, and we couldn't get away from him. What should you do, Tom?"

Tom paused, and at last turned away contemptuously, saying, "But the lion *isn't* coming. What's the use of talking?"

"But I like to fancy how it would be," said Maggie, following him. "Just think what you would do, Tom."

"Oh, don't bother, Maggie! you're such a silly—I shall go and see my rabbits."

Maggie's heart began to flutter with fear. She dared not tell the sad truth at once, but she walked after Tom in trembling silence as he went out, thinking how she could tell him the news so as to soften at once his sorrow and his anger; for Maggie dreaded Tom's anger of all things—it was quite a different anger from her own.

"Tom," she said, timidly, when they were out-of-doors, "how much money did you give for your rabbits?"

"Two half-crowns and a sixpence," said Tom, promptly.

"I think I've got a great deal more than that in my steel purse up-stairs. I'll ask mother to give it you."

"What for?" said Tom. "I don't want *your* money, you silly thing. I've got a great deal more money than you, because I'm a boy. I always have half-sovereigns and sovereigns for my Christmas boxes, because I shall be a man, and you only have five-shilling pieces, because you're only a girl."

"Well, but, Tom—if mother would let me give you two half-crowns and a sixpence out of my purse to put into your pocket to spend, you know, and buy some more rabbits with it?"

"More rabbits? I don't want any more."

"Oh, but, Tom, they're all dead."

Tom stopped immediately in his walk and turned round toward Maggie. "You forgot to feed 'em, then, and Harry forgot?" he said, his color heightening for a moment, but soon subsiding. "I'll pitch into Harry—I'll have him turned away. And I don't love you, Maggie. You sha'n't go fishing with me to-morrow. I told you to go and see the rabbits every day." He walked on again.

"Yes, but I forgot—and I couldn't help it, indeed, Tom. I'm so very sorry," said Maggie, while the tears rushed fast.

"You're a naughty girl," said Tom, severely, "and I'm sorry I bought you the fish-line. I don't love you."

"Oh, Tom, it's very cruel," sobbed Maggie. "I'd forgive you if *you* forgot anything—I wouldn't mind what you did—I'd forgive you and love you."

"Yes, you're a silly; but I never *do* forget things—*I* don't."

"Oh, please forgive me, Tom; my heart will break," said Maggie, shaking with sobs, clinging to Tom's arm, and laying her wet cheek on his shoulder.

Tom shook her off and stopped again, saying in a peremptory tone, "Now, Maggie, you just listen. Aren't I a good brother to you?"

"Ye-ye-es," sobbed Maggie, her chin rising and falling convulsively.

"Didn't I think about your fish-line all this quarter, and mean to buy it, and saved my money o' purpose, and wouldn't go halves in the toffee, and Spouncer fought me because I wouldn't?"

"Ye-ye-es . . . and I . . . lo-lo-love you so, Tom."

"But you're a naughty girl. Last holidays you licked the paint off my lozenge-box, and the holidays before that

you let the boat drag my fish-line down when I set you to watch it, and you pushed your head through my kite, all for nothing."

"But I didn't mean," said Maggie; "I couldn't help it."

"Yes, you could," said Tom, "if you'd minded what you were doing. And you're a naughty girl, and you sha'n't go fishing with me to-morrow."

With this terrible conclusion Tom ran away from Maggie toward the mill, meaning to greet Luke there, and complain to him of Harry.

Maggie stood motionless, except from her sobs, for a minute or two; then she turned round and ran into the house and up to her attic, where she sat on the floor and laid her head against the worm-eaten shelf, with a crushing sense of misery. Tom was come home, and she had thought how happy she should be, and now he was cruel to her. What use was anything if Tom didn't love her? Oh, he was very cruel! Hadn't she wanted to give him the money, and said how very sorry she was? She knew she was naughty to her mother, but she had never been naughty to Tom—had never *meant* to be naughty to him.

"Oh, he is cruel!" Maggie sobbed aloud, finding a wretched pleasure in the hollow resonance that came through the long empty space of the attic. She never thought of beating or grinding her Fetish; she was too miserable to be angry.

These bitter sorrows of childhood! when sorrow is all new and strange, when hope has not yet got wings to fly beyond the days and weeks, and the space from summer to summer seems measureless.

Maggie soon thought she had been hours in the attic, and it must be tea-time, and they were all having their tea and not thinking of her. Well, then, she would stay up there and starve herself—hide herself behind the tub,

and stay there all night; and then they would all be frightened, and Tom would be sorry. Thus Maggie thought in the pride of her heart as she crept behind the tub; but she began to cry again at the idea that they didn't mind her being there. If she went down again to Tom now, would he forgive her? Perhaps her father would be there, and he would take her part. But, then, she wanted Tom to forgive her because he loved her, not because his father told him. No, she would never go down if Tom didn't come to fetch her. This resolution lasted in great intensity for five dark minutes behind the tub; but then the need of being loved, the strongest need in poor Maggie's nature, began to wrestle with her pride, and soon threw it. She crept from behind her tub into the twilight of the long attic, but just then she heard a quick footstep on the stairs.

Tom had been too much interested in his talk with Luke, in going the round of the premises, walking in and out where he pleased, and whittling sticks without any particular reason, except that he didn't whittle sticks at school, to think of Maggie and the effect his anger had produced on her. He meant to punish her, and, that business having been performed, he occupied himself with other matters like a practical person. But when he had been called in to tea, his father said, "Why, where's the little wench?" and Mrs. Tulliver, almost at the same moment, said, "Where's your little sister?" both of them having supposed that Maggie and Tom had been together all the afternoon.

"I don't know," said Tom. He didn't want to "tell" on Maggie, though he was angry with her; for Tom Tulliver was a lad of honor.

"What! hasn't she been playing with you all this while?" said the father. "She'd been thinking o' nothing but your coming home."

"I haven't seen her this two hours," says Tom, commencing on the plum-cake.

"Goodness heart, she's got drownded!" exclaimed Mrs. Tulliver, rising from her seat and running to the window. "How could you let her do so?" she added, as became a fearful woman, accusing she didn't know whom of she didn't know what.

"Nay, nay, she's none drownded," said Mr. Tulliver. "You've been naughty to her, I doubt, Tom?"

"I'm sure I haven't, father," said Tom, indignantly. "I think she's in the house."

"Perhaps up in that attic," said Mrs. Tulliver, "a-singing and talking to herself and forgetting all about meal-times."

"You go and fetch her down, Tom," said Mr. Tulliver, rather sharply, his perspicacity or his fatherly fondness for Maggie making him suspect that the lad had been rather hard upon "the little un," else she would never have left his side. "And be good to her, do you hear? else I'll let you know better."

Tom never disobeyed his father, for Mr. Tulliver was a peremptory man, and, as he said, would never let anybody get hold of his whip-hand; but he went out rather sullenly, carrying his piece of plum-cake, and not intending to retrieve Maggie's punishment, which was no more than she deserved. Tom was only thirteen, and had no decided views in grammar and arithmetic, regarding them for the most part as open questions, but he was particularly clear and positive on one point—namely, that he would punish everybody who deserved it; why, he wouldn't have minded being punished himself, if he deserved it; but, then, he never *did* deserve it.

It was Tom's step, then, that Maggie heard on the stairs when her need of love had triumphed over her pride, and she was going down with her swollen eyes and dishevelled

hair to beg for pity. At least her father would stroke her head and say, "Never mind, my wench." It is a wonderful subduer, this need of love—this hunger of the heart—as peremptory as that other hunger by which Nature forces us to submit to the yoke and change the face of the world.

But she knew Tom's step, and her heart began to beat violently with the sudden shock of hope. He only stood still at the top of the stairs, and said, "Maggie, you're to come down." But she rushed to him and clung round his neck, sobbing, "Oh, Tom, please forgive me—I can't bear it—I will always be good—always remember things—do love me—please, dear Tom!"

We learn to restrain ourselves as we get older. We keep apart when we have quarrelled, express ourselves in well-bred phrases, and in this way preserve a dignified alienation, showing much firmness on one side, and swallowing much grief on the other. We no longer approximate in our behavior to the mere impulsiveness of the lower animals, but conduct ourselves in every respect like members of a highly civilized society. Maggie and Tom were still very much like young animals, and so she could rub her cheek against his, and kiss his ear in a random, sobbing way; and there were tender fibres in the lad that had been used to answer to Maggie's fondling, so that he behaved with a weakness quite inconsistent with his resolution to punish her as much as she deserved; he actually began to kiss her in return, and say:

"Don't cry, then, Magsie—here, eat a bit o' cake."

Maggie's sobs began to subside, and she put out her mouth for the cake and bit a piece; and then Tom bit a piece, just for company; and they ate together, and rubbed each other's cheeks and brows and noses together while they ate with a humiliating resemblance to two friendly ponies.

"Come along, Magsie, and have tea," said Tom, at last, when there was no more cake except what was downstairs.

## Tom Brown and the Slogger[1]

*Thomas Hughes* (1822–1896)

It was drawing toward the close of Arthur's first half-year, and the May evenings were lengthening out. Locking-up was not till eight o'clock, and everybody was beginning to talk about what he would do in the holidays. The shell, in which form all our dramatis personæ now are, were reading among other things the last book of Homer's *Iliad*, and had worked through it as far as the speeches of the women over Hector's body. It is a whole school-day, and four or five of the school-house boys (among whom are Arthur, Tom, and East) are preparing third lesson together. They have finished the regulation forty lines, and are for the most part getting very tired, notwithstanding the exquisite pathos of Helen's lamentation. And now several long four-syllabled words come together, and the boy with the dictionary strikes work.

"I am not going to look out any more words," says he; "we've done the quantity. Ten to one we sha'n't get so far. Let's go out into the close."

"Come along, boys," cries East, always ready to leave the grind, as he called it; "our old coach is laid up, you know, and we shall have one of the new masters, who's sure to go slow and let us down easy."

So an adjournment to the close was carried *nem. con.*, little Arthur not daring to uplift his voice; but, being deep-

[1] From *Tom Brown's School-Days.*

ly interested in what they were reading, stayed quietly behind, and learned on for his own pleasure.

As East had said, the regular master of the form was unwell, and they were to be heard by one of the new masters, quite a young man, who had only just left the university. Certainly it would be hard lines, if, by dawdling as much as possible in coming in and taking their places, entering into long-winded explanations of what was the usual course of the regular master of the form, and others of the stock contrivances of boys for wasting time in school, they could not spin out the lesson so that he should not work them through more than the forty lines; as to which quantity there was a perpetual fight going on between the master and his form, the latter insisting and enforcing by passive resistance that it was the prescribed quantity of Homer for a shell lesson, the former that there was no fixed quantity, but that they must always be ready to go on to fifty or sixty lines if there were time within the hour. However, notwithstanding all their efforts, the new master got on horribly quick; he seemed to have the bad taste to be really interested in the lesson, and to be trying to work them up into something like appreciation of it, giving them good spirited English words, instead of the wretched bald stuff into which they rendered poor old Homer; and construing over each piece himself to them, after each boy, to show them how it should be done.

Now the clock strikes the three-quarters; there is only a quarter of an hour more; but the forty lines are all but done. So the boys, one after another, who are called up, stick more and more, and make balder and ever more bald work of it. The poor young master is pretty near beat by this time, and feels ready to knock his head against the wall, or his fingers against somebody else's head. So he

gives up altogether the lower and middle parts of the form, and looks round in despair at the boys on the top bench, to see if there is one out of whom he can strike a spark or two, and who will be too chivalrous to murder the most beautiful utterances of the most beautiful woman of the old world. His eye rests on Arthur, and he calls him up to finish construing Helen's speech. Whereupon all the other boys draw long breaths, and begin to stare about and take it easy. They are all safe: Arthur is the head of the form, and sure to be able to construe, and that will tide on safely till the hour strikes.

Arthur proceeds to read out the passage in Greek before construing it, as the custom is. Tom, who isn't paying much attention, is suddenly caught by the falter in his voice as he reads the two lines:

> ἀλλὰ σὺ τόν γ' ἐπέεσσι παραιφάμενος κατέρυκες,
> Σῇ τ' ἀγανοφροσύνῃ καὶ σοῖς ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσιν.

He looks up at Arthur. "Why, bless us," thinks he, "what can be the matter with the young 'un? He's never going to get floored. He's sure to have learned to the end." Next moment he is reassured by the spirited tone in which Arthur begins construing, and betakes himself to drawing dogs' heads in his note-book, while the master, evidently enjoying the change, turns his back on the middle bench and stands before Arthur, beating a sort of time with his hand and foot, and saying, "Yes, yes," "very well," as Arthur goes on.

But as he nears the fatal two lines, Tom catches that falter and again looks up. He sees that there is something the matter—Arthur can hardly get on at all. What can it be?

Suddenly at this point Arthur breaks down altogether, and fairly bursts out crying, and dashes the cuff of his

jacket across his eyes, blushing up to the roots of his hair, and feeling as if he should like to go down suddenly through the floor. The whole form are taken aback; most of them stare stupidly at him, while those who are gifted with presence of mind find their places and look steadily at their books, in hopes of not catching the master's eye and getting called up in Arthur's place.

The master looks puzzled for a moment, and then seeing, as the fact is, that the boy is really affected to tears by the most touching thing in Homer, perhaps in all profane poetry put together, steps up to him and lays his hand kindly on his shoulder, saying, "Never mind, my little man, you've construed very well. Stop a minute, there's no hurry."

Now, as luck would have it, there sat next above Tom that day, in the middle bench of the form, a big boy, by name Williams, generally supposed to be the cock of the shell, therefore of all the school below the fifths. The small boys, who are great speculators on the prowess of their elders, used to hold forth to one another about Williams's great strength, and to discuss whether East or Brown would take a licking from him. He was called Slogger Williams, from the force with which it was supposed he could hit. In the main, he was a rough, good-natured fellow enough, but very much alive to his own dignity. He reckoned himself the king of the form, and kept up his position with a strong hand, especially in the matter of forcing boys not to construe more than the legitimate forty lines. He had already grunted and grumbled to himself when Arthur went on reading beyond the forty lines. But now that he had broken down just in the middle of all the long words, the Slogger's wrath was fairly roused.

"Sneaking little brute," muttered he, regardless of

prudence, "clapping on the waterworks just in the hardest place; see if I don't punch his head after fourth lesson."

"Whose?" said Tom, to whom the remark seemed to be addressed.

"Why, that little sneak Arthur's," replied Williams.

"No, you sha'n't," said Tom.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Williams, looking at Tom with great surprise for a moment, and then giving him a sudden dig in the ribs with his elbow, which sent Tom's books flying on the floor, and called the attention of the master, who turned suddenly round, and, seeing the state of things, said:

"Williams, go down three places, and then go on."

The Slogger found his legs very slowly, and proceeded to go below Tom and two other boys with great disgust, and then, turning round and facing the master, said, "I haven't learned any more, sir; our lesson is only forty lines."

"Is that so?" said the master, appealing generally to the top bench. No answer.

"Who is the head boy of the form?" said he, waxing wroth.

"Arthur, sir," answered three or four boys, indicating our friend.

"Oh, your name's Arthur. Well, now, what is the length of your regular lesson?"

Arthur hesitated a moment, and then said, "We call it only forty lines, sir."

"How do you mean you call it?"

"Well, sir, Mr. Graham says we ain't to stop there when there's time to construe more."

"I understand," said the master. "Williams, go down three more places, and write me out the lesson in Greek and English. And now, Arthur, finish construing."

"Oh! would I be in Arthur's shoes after fourth lesson?"

said the little boys to one another; but Arthur finished Helen's speech without any further catastrophe, and the clock struck four, which ended third lesson.

Another hour was occupied in preparing and saying fourth lesson, during which Williams was bottling up his wrath; and when five struck, and the lessons for the day were over, he prepared to take summary vengeance on the innocent cause of his misfortune.

Tom was detained in school a few minutes after the rest, and on coming out into the quadrangle, the first thing he saw was a small ring of boys applauding Williams, who was holding Arthur by the collar.

"There, you young sneak," said he, giving Arthur a cuff on the head with his other hand, "what made you say that—"

"Hullo!" said Tom, shouldering into the crowd; "you drop that, Williams; you sha'n't touch him."

"Who'll stop me?" said the Slogger, raising his hand again.

"I," said Tom; and, suiting the action to the word, struck the arm which held Arthur's arm so sharply that the Slogger dropped it with a start, and turned the full current of his wrath on Tom.

"Will you fight?"

"Yes, of course."

"Huzza, there's going to be a fight between Slogger Williams and Tom Brown!"

The news ran like wild-fire about, and many boys who were on their way to tea at their several houses turned back and sought the back of the chapel, where the fights come off.

"Just run and tell East to come and back me," said Tom to a small school-house boy, who was off like a rocket to Harrowell's, just stopping for a moment to poke his head

into the school-house hall, where the lower boys were already at tea, and sing out, "Fight! Tom Brown and Slogger Williams."

Up start half the boys at once, leaving bread, eggs, butter, sprats, and all the rest to take care of themselves. The greater part of the remainder follow in a minute, after swallowing their tea, carrying their food in their hands to consume as they go. Three or four only remain, who steal the butter of the more impetuous, and make to themselves an unctuous feast.

In another minute East and Martin tear through the quadrangle carrying a sponge, and arrive at the scene of action just as the combatants are beginning to strip.

Tom felt he had got his work cut out for him, as he stripped off his jacket, waistcoat, and braces. East tied his handkerchief round his waist, and rolled up his shirt-sleeves for him: "Now, old boy, don't you open your mouth to say a word, or try to help yourself a bit; we'll do all that; you keep all your breath and strength for the Slogger." Martin meanwhile folded the clothes and put them under the chapel rails; and now Tom, with East to handle him and Martin to give him a knee, steps out on the turf, and is ready for all that may come: and here is the Slogger too, all stripped and thirsting for the fray.

It doesn't look a fair match at first glance: Williams is nearly two inches taller, and probably a long year older than his opponent, and he is very strongly made about the arms and shoulders; "peels well," as the little knot of big fifth-form boys, the amateurs, say, who stand outside the ring of little boys, looking complacently on, but taking no active part in the proceedings. But down below he is not so good by any means; no spring from the loins, and feeblish, not to say shipwrecky, about the knees. Tom, on the contrary, though not half so strong in the arms,

is good all over, straight, hard, and springy from neck to ankle, better perhaps in his legs than anywhere. Besides, you can see by the clear white of his eye and fresh, bright look of his skin, that he is in tip-top training, able to do all he knows; while the Slogger looks rather sodden, as if he didn't take much exercise and ate too much tuck. The time-keeper is chosen, a large ring made, and the two stand up opposite one another for a moment, giving us time just to make our little observations.

"If Tom 'll only condescend to fight with his head and heels," as East mutters to Martin, "we shall do."

But seemingly he won't, for there he goes in, making play with both hands. Hard all, is the word; the two stand to one another like men; rally follows rally in quick succession, each fighting as if he thought to finish the whole thing out of hand. "Can't last at this rate," say the knowing ones, while the partisans of each make the air ring with their shouts and counter-shouts of encouragement, approval, and defiance.

"Take it easy, take it easy—keep away, let him come after you," implores East, as he wipes Tom's face after the first round with wet sponge, while he sits back on Martin's knee, supported by the Madman's long arms, which tremble a little from excitement.

"Time's up," calls the time-keeper.

"There he goes again, hang it all!" growls East, as his man is at it again as hard as ever. A very severe round follows, in which Tom gets out and out the worst of it, and is at last hit clean off his legs and deposited on the grass by a right-hander from the Slogger.

Loud shouts rise from the boys of Slogger's house, and the School-house are silent and vicious, ready to pick quarrels anywhere.

"Two to one in half-crowns on the big 'un," says Rattle,

one of the amateurs, a tall fellow, in thunder-and-lightning waistcoat, and puffy, good-natured face.

"Done!" says Groove, another amateur of quieter look, taking out his note-book to enter it—for our friend Rattle sometimes forgets these little things.

Meantime East is freshening up Tom with the sponges for next round, and has set two other boys to rub his hands.

"Tom, old boy," whispers he, "this may be fun for you, but it's death to me. He'll hit all the fight out of you in another five minutes, and then I shall go and drown myself in the island ditch. Feint him—use your legs!—draw him about! he'll lose his wind then in no time, and you can go into him. Hit at his body too; we'll take care of his frontispiece by-and-by."

Tom felt the wisdom of the counsel, and saw already that he couldn't go in and finish the Slogger off at mere hammer and tongs, so changed his tactics completely in the third round. He now fights cautious, getting away from and parrying the Slogger's lunging hits, instead of trying to counter, and leading his enemy a dance all round the ring after him. "He's funking; go in, Williams." "Catch him up," "Finish him off," scream the small boys of the Slogger party.

"Just what we want," thinks East, chuckling to himself, as he sees Williams, excited by these shouts, and thinking the game in his own hands, blowing himself in his exertions to get to close quarters again, while Tom is keeping away with perfect ease.

They quarter over the ground again and again, Tom always on the defensive.

The Slogger pulls up at last for a moment, fairly blown.

"Now then, Tom," sings out East, dancing with delight. Tom goes in in a twinkling and hits two heavy

body blows, and gets away again before the Slogger can catch his wind; which when he does he rushes with blind fury at Tom, and, being skilfully parried and avoided, overreaches himself and falls on his face amidst terrific cheers from the School-house boys.

"Double your two to one?" says Groove to Rattle, notebook in hand.

"Stop a bit," says that hero, looking uncomfortably at Williams, who is puffing away on his second's knee, winded enough, but little the worse in any other way.

After another round the Slogger too seems to see that he can't go in and win right off, and has met his match or thereabouts. So he too begins to use his head, and tries to make Tom lose patience and come in before his time. And so the fight sways on, now one, and now the other, getting a trifling pull.

Tom's face begins to look very one-sided—there are little queer bumps on his forehead, and his mouth is bleeding; but East keeps the wet sponge going so scientifically that he comes up looking as fresh and bright as ever. Williams is only slightly marked in the face, but by the nervous movement of his elbows you can see that Tom's body blows are telling. In fact, half the vice of the Slogger's hitting is neutralized, for he daren't lunge out freely for fear of exposing his sides. It is too interesting by this time for much shouting, and the whole ring is very quiet.

"All right, Tommy," whispers East; "hold on's the horse that's to win. We've got the last. Keep your head, old boy."

But where is Arthur all this time? Words cannot paint the poor little fellow's distress. He couldn't muster courage to come up to the ring, but wandered up and down from the great fives' court to the corner of the chapel rails. Now trying to make up his mind to throw himself between

them, and try to stop them; then thinking of running in and telling his friend Mary, who he knew would instantly report to the Doctor. The stories he had heard of men being killed in prize-fights rose up horribly before him.

Once only, when the shouts of "Well done, Brown!" "Huzza for the School-house!" rose higher than ever, he ventured up to the ring, thinking the victory was won. Catching sight of Tom's face in the state I have described, all fear of consequences vanishing out of his mind, he rushed straight off to the matron's room, beseeching her to get the fight stopped, or he should die.

But it's time for us to get back to the close. What is this fierce tumult and confusion? The ring is broken, and high and angry words are being bandied about: "It's all fair"—"It isn't"—"No hugging"; the fight is stopped. The combatants, however, sit there quietly tended by their seconds, while their adherents wrangle in the middle. East can't help shouting challenges to two or three of the other side, though he never leaves Tom for a moment, and plies the sponges as fast as ever.

The fact is, that at the end of the last round, Tom, seeing a good opening, had closed with his opponent, and after a moment's struggle had thrown him heavily, by the help of the fall he had learned from his village rival in the vale of White House. Williams hadn't the ghost of a chance with Tom at wrestling; and the conviction broke at once on the Slogger faction that if this were allowed their man must be licked. There was a strong feeling in the school against catching hold and throwing, though it was generally ruled all fair within certain limits; so the ring was broken and the fight stopped.

The School-house are overruled—the fight is on again, but there is to be no throwing; and East in high wrath threatens to take his man away after next round (which

he doesn't mean to do, by-the-way), when suddenly young Brooke comes through the small gate at the end of the chapel. The School-house faction rush to him. "Oh, hurra! now we shall get fair play."

"Please, Brooke, come up, they won't let Tom Brown throw him."

"Throw whom?" says Brooke, coming up to the ring. "Oh! Williams, I see. Nonsense! of course he may throw him if he catches him fairly above the waist."

Now, young Brooke, you're in the sixth, you know, and you ought to stop all fights. He looks hard at both boys. "Anything wrong?" says he to East, nodding at Tom.

"Not a bit."

"Not beat at all?"

"Bless you, no! heaps of fight in him. Ain't there, Tom?"

Tom looks at Brooke and grins.

"How's he?" nodding at Williams.

"So, so; rather done, I think, since his last fall. He won't stand above two more."

"Time's up!" The boys rise again and face one another. Brooke can't find it in his heart to stop them just yet, so the round goes on, the Slogger waiting for Tom and reserving all his strength to hit him out should he come in for the wrestling dodge again, for he feels that that must be stopped, or his sponge will soon go up in the air.

And now another new-comer appears on the field, to wit, the under-porter, with his long brush and great wooden receptacle for dust under his arm. He has been sweeping out the schools.

"You'd better stop, gentlemen," he says; "the Doctor knows that Brown's fighting—he'll be out in a minute."

"You go to Bath, Bill," is all that that excellent ser-

vitor gets by his advice. And, being a man of his hands, and a staunch upholder of the School-house, can't help stopping to look on for a bit and see Tom Brown, their pet craftsman, fight a round.

It is grim earnest now, and no mistake. Both boys feel this, and summon every power of head, hand, and eye to their aid. A piece of luck on either side, a foot slipping, a blow getting well home, or another fall, may decide it. Tom works slowly round for an opening; he has all the legs, and can choose his own time; the Slogger waits for the attack, and hopes to finish it by some heavy right-handed blow. As they quarter slowly over the ground, the evening sun comes out from behind a cloud and falls full on Williams's face. Tom darts in; the heavy right-hand is delivered, but only grazes his head. A short rally at close quarters and they close; in another moment the Slogger is thrown again heavily for the third time.

"I'll give you three to two on the little one in half-crowns," said Groove to Rattle.

"No, thank'ee," answers the other, diving his hands farther into his coat-tails.

Just at this stage of the proceedings the door of the turret which leads to the Doctor's library suddenly opens, and he steps into the close, and makes straight for the ring, in which Brown and the Slogger are both seated on their seconds' knees for the last time.

"The Doctor! the Doctor!" shouts some small boy who catches sight of him, and the ring melts away in a few seconds, the small boys tearing off, Tom collaring his jacket and waistcoat, and slipping through the little gate by the chapel, and round the corner to Harrowell's with his backers, as lively as need be; Williams and his backers making off not quite so fast across the close; Groove, Rattle, and the other bigger fellows trying to combine

dignity and prudence in a comical manner, and walking off fast enough, they hope, not to be recognized, and not fast enough to look like running away.

Young Brooke alone remains on the ground by the time the Doctor gets there, and touches his hat, not without a slight inward qualm.

"Ha, Brooke! I am surprised to see you here. Don't you know that I expect the sixth to stop fighting?"

Brooke felt much more uncomfortable than he had expected, but he was rather a favourite with the Doctor for his openness and plainness of speech; so blurted out, as he walked by the Doctor's side, who had already turned back:

"Yes, sir, generally. But I thought you wished us to exercise a discretion in the matter too—not to interfere too soon."

"But they have been fighting this half-hour and more," said the Doctor.

"Yes, sir; but neither was hurt. And they're the sort of boys who'll be all the better friends now, which they wouldn't have been if they had been stopped any earlier—before it was so equal."

"Who was fighting with Brown?" said the Doctor.

"Williams, sir, of Thompson's. He is bigger than Brown, and had the best of it at first, but not when you came up, sir. There's a good deal of jealousy between our house and Thompson's, and there would have been more fights if this hadn't been let go on, or if either of them had had much the worst of it."

"Well, but, Brooke," said the Doctor, "doesn't this look a little as if you exercised your discretion by only stopping a fight when the School-house boy is getting the worst of it?"

Brooke, it must be confessed, felt rather gravelled.

"Remember," added the Doctor, as he stopped at the turret-door, "this fight is not to go on—you'll see to that. And I expect you to stop all fights in future at once."

"Very well, sir," said young Brooke, touching his hat, and not sorry to see the turret-door close behind the Doctor's back.

## The Free Life on the Road[1]

*George Meredith* (1828–1909)

[Harry Richmond, having played truant, is pursued by his schoolmaster, Mr. Rippenger; to avoid capture he slips under the flap of a tramp's tent. A little girl, who is within, hides him. The schoolmaster, growing suspicious of the tramp, demands to search the tent.]

With the instinct to defeat the master, I crawled in the line of the shadows to the farther side of a tent, where I felt a hand clutch mine. "Hide me," said I; and the curtain of the tent was raised. After squeezing through boxes and straw, I lay flat, covered by a mat smelling of abominable cheese, and felt a head outside it on my chest. Several times Mr. Rippenger pronounced my name in the way habitual to him in anger, "Rye!"

Then a light was thrust in the tent, and the man said, "Me deceive you, sir! See for yourself, to satisfy yourself. Here's our little uns laid warm, and a girl there, head on the mat, going down to join her tribe at Lipcombe, and one of our women sleeps here, and all told. But for you to suspect me of combining— Thank ye, sir. You've got my word as a man."

The light went away. My chest was relieved of the

[1] From *The Adventures of Harry Richmond.*

weight on it. I sat up, and the creature who had been kind to me laid mat and straw on the ground, and drew my head on her shoulder, where I slept fast.

I woke very early, though I had taken kindly to my pillow, as I found by my having an arm round my companion's neck, and her fingers intertwisted with mine. For a while I lay looking at her eyes, which had every imaginable light and signification in them; they advised me to lie quiet, they laughed at my wonder, they said, "Dear little fellow!" they flashed as from under a cloud, darkened, flashed out of it, seemed to dip in water and shine, and were sometimes like a view into a forest, sometimes intensely sunny, never quite still. I trusted her, and could have slept again, but the sight of the tent stupefied me; I fancied the sky had fallen, and gasped for air; my head was extremely dizzy, too; not one idea in it was kept from wheeling. This confusion of my head flew to my legs when imitating her, I rose to go forth. In a fit of horror I thought, "I've forgotten how to walk."

Summoning my manful resolution, I made the attempt to step across the children swaddled in matting and straw and old gowns or petticoats. The necessity for doing it with a rush seized me after the first step. I pitched over one little bundle, right on to the figure of a sleeping woman. All she did was to turn round, murmuring, "Naughty Jackie." My companion pulled me along gravely, and once in the air, with a good breath of it in my chest, I felt tall and strong, and knew what had occurred. The tent where I had slept struck me as more curious than my own circumstances. I lifted my face to the sky; it was just sunrise, beautiful; bits of long and curling cloud brushed any way close on the blue, and rosy and white, deliciously cool; the grass was all gray, our dell in shadow, and the tops of the trees burning, a few birds twittering.

I sucked a blade of grass.

"I wish it was all water here," I said.

"Come and have a drink and a bathe," said my companion.

We went down the dell and over a juniper slope, reminding me of my day at John Salter's house and the last of dear Heriot. Rather to my shame, my companion beat me at running; she was very swift, and my legs were stiff.

"Can you swim?" she asked me.

"I can row, and swim, and fence, and ride, and fire a pistol," I said.

"Oh, dear," said she, after eyeing me enviously. I could see that I had checked a recital of her accomplishments.

We arrived at a clear stream in a gentleman's park, where grass rolled smooth as sea-water on a fine day, and cows and horses were feeding.

"I can catch that horse and mount him," she said.

I was astonished.

"Straddle?"

She nodded down for "Yes."

"No saddle?"

She nodded level for "No."

My respect for her returned. But she could not swim.

"Only up to my knees," she confessed.

"Have a look at me," said I; and I stripped and shot into the water, happy as a fish, and thinking how much nicer it was than champagne. My enjoyment made her so envious that she plucked off her stockings and came in as far as she dared. I called to her, "You're like a cow," and she showed her teeth, bidding me not say that.

"A cow! a cow!" I repeated, in my superior pleasure.

She spun out in a breath, "If you say that I'll run away with every bit of your clothes, and you'll come out and run about naked, you will."

"Now I float," was my answer, "now I dive"; and when I came up she welcomed me with a big, bright grin.

A smart run in the heat dried me. I dressed, finding half my money on the grass. She asked me to give her one of those bits—a shilling. I gave her two, upon which she asked me, invitingly, if ever I tossed. I replied that I never tossed for money; but she had caught a shilling, and I could not resist guessing "heads," and won; the same with her second shilling. She handed them to me sullenly, sobbing, yet she would not take them back.

"By-and-by you give me another two," she said, growing lively again.

We agreed that it would be a good thing if we entered the village and bought something. None of the shops were open. We walked through the churchyard. I said, "Here's where dead people are buried."

"I'll dance if you talk about dead people," said she, and began whooping at the pitch of her voice. On my wishing to know why she did it, her reply was that it was to make the dead people hear. My feelings were strange: the shops not open, and no living people to be seen. We climbed trees, and sat on a branch talking of birds' eggs till hunger drove us to the village street, where, near the public-house, we met the man-tramp, who whistled.

In a friendly manner he advised me to go to school; if not there, then to go home. My idea, which I had only partly conceived, was to have a look at Riversley over a hedge, kiss my Aunt Dorothy unaware, and fly subsequently in search of my father. Breakfast, however, was my immediate thought. He and the girl sat down to breakfast at the inn as my guests. We ate mutton-chops and eggs and drank coffee. After it, though I had no suspicions, I noticed that the man grew thoughtful. He proposed to me, supposing I had no objection against slow

travelling, to join company for a couple of days, if I was for Hampshire, which I stated was the county I meant to visit.

"Well then, here now, come along, d'ye see, look," said he, "I mustn't be pounced on, and no missing young gentleman in my society, and me took half-a-crown for his absence; that won't do. You get on pretty well with the gal, and that's a screaming farce: none of us do. Lord! she looks down on such scum as us. She's gypsy blood, true sort; everything's sausages that gets into their pockets, no matter what it was when it was out. Well then, now, here, you and the gal go t' other side o' Bed'l-ming, and you wait for us on the heath, and we'll be there to comfort ye 'fore dark. Is it a fister?"

He held out his hand; I agreed; and he remarked that he now counted a breakfast in the list of his gains from never asking questions.

I was glad enough to quit the village in a hurry. My companion related her history. She belonged to a Hampshire gypsy tribe, and had been on a visit to a relative down in the East counties, who died on the road, leaving her to be brought home by these tramps; she called them mumpers, and made faces when she spoke of them. Gypsies, she said, were a different sort; gypsies camped in gentlemen's parks; gypsies, horses, fiddles, and the wide world—that was what she liked. The wide world she described as a heath, where you looked and never saw the end of it. I let her talk on. For me to talk of my affairs to a girl without bonnet and boots would have been absurd. Otherwise, her society pleased me; she was so like a boy, and unlike any boy I knew.

My mental occupation on the road was to calculate how many hill-tops I should climb before I beheld Riversley. The Sunday bells sounded homely from village to village

as soon as I was convinced that I heard no bells summoning boarders to Rippenger's school. The shops in the villages continued shut; however, I told the girl they should pay me for it next day, and we had an interesting topic in discussing as to the various things we would buy. She was for bright ribands and draper's stuff, I for pastry and letter-paper. The smell of people's dinners united our appetites. Going through a village I saw a man carrying a great baked pie, smelling overpoweringly, so that to ask him his price for it was a natural impulse with me. "What! sell my Sunday dinner?" he said, and appeared ready to drop the dish. Nothing stopped his staring until we had finished a plateful apiece and some beer in his cottage among his family. He wanted to take me in alone. "She's a common tramp," he said of the girl.

"That's a lie," she answered.

Of course I would not leave her hungry outside, so in the end he reluctantly invited us both, and introduced us to his wife.

"Here's a young gentleman asks a bit o' dinner, and a young I-d'n-know-what's after the same; I leaves it to you, missus."

His wife took it off his shoulders in good-humor, saying it was lucky she made the pie big enough for her family and strays. They would not accept more than a shilling for our joint repast. The man said that was the account to a farthing, if I was too proud to be a poor man's guest, and insisted on treating him like a public. Perhaps I would shake hands at parting? I did cordially, and remembered him when people were not so civil. They wanted to know whether we had made a runaway match of it. The fun of passing a boys' school and hearing the usher threaten to punish one fellow for straying from ranks, entertained me immensely. I laughed at them just

as the stupid people we met laughed at me, which was unpleasant for the time; but I knew there was not a single boy who would not have changed places with me, only give him the chance, though my companion was a gypsy girl, and she certainly did look odd company for a gentleman's son in a tea-garden and public-house parlor. At nightfall, however, I was glad of her and she of me, and we walked hand in hand. I narrated tales of Roman history. It was very well for her to say, "I'll mother you," as we lay down to sleep; I discovered that she would never have hooted over churchyard graves in the night. She confessed she believed the devil went about in the night. Our bed was a cart under a shed, our bed-clothes fern-leaves and armfuls of straw. The shafts of the cart were down, so we lay between upright and level, and awakening in the early light I found our four legs hanging over the seat in front. "How you have been kicking!" said I. She accused me of the same. Next minute she pointed over the side of the cart, and I saw the tramp's horse and his tents beneath a broad roadside oak-tree. Her face was comical, just like a boy's who thinks he has escaped and is caught. "Let's run," she said. Preferring positive independence, I followed her, and then she told me that she had overheard the tramp last night swearing I was as good as a fistful of half-crowns lost to him if he missed me. The image of Rippenger's school overshadowed me at this communication. With some melancholy I said, "You'll join your friends, won't you?"

She snapped her fingers: "Mumpers!" and walked on carelessly.

We were now on the great heaths. They brought the memory of my father vividly; the smell of the air half inclined me to turn my steps toward London, I grew so full of longing for him. Nevertheless I resolved to have

one gaze at Riversley, my Aunt Dorothy, and Sewis, the old gray-brown butler, and the lamb that had grown a sheep; wonderful contrasts to my grand kings of England career. My first clear recollection of Riversley was here, like an outline of a hill seen miles away. I might have shed a tear or two out of love for my father, had not the thought that I was a very queer boy displaced his image. I could not but be a very queer boy, such a lot of things happened to me. Suppose I joined the gypsies? My companion wished me to. She had brothers horse-dealers, beautiful fiddlers. Suppose I learnt the fiddle? Suppose I learnt their language and went about with them and became king of the gypsies? My companion shook her head; she could not encourage this ambitious idea, because she had never heard of a king of the gypsies or a queen either. "We fool people," she said, and offended me, for our school believed in a gypsy king, and one fellow, Hackman, used to sing a song of a gypsy king; and it was as much as to say that my school-fellows were fools, every one of them. I accused her of telling lies. She grinned angrily. "I don't tell 'em to friends," she said. We had a quarrel. The truth was, I was enraged at the sweeping out of my prospects of rising to distinction among the gypsies. After breakfast at an inn, where a waiter laughed at us to our faces, and we fed scowling, shy, and hungry, we had another quarrel. I informed her of my opinion that gypsies could not tell fortunes.

"They can, and you come to my mother and my aunt, and see if they can't tell your fortune," said she, in a fury.

"Yes, and that's how they fool people," said I. I enjoyed seeing the flash of her teeth. But my daring of her to look me in the eyes and swear on her oath she believed the fortunes true ones, sent her into a fit of sullenness.

"Go along, you nasty little fellow, your shadow isn't

half a yard," she said, and I could smile at that; my shadow stretched half across the road. We had a quarrelsome day wherever we went; rarely walking close together till nightfall, when she edged up to my hand, with, "I say, I'll keep you warm to-night, I will." She hugged me almost too tight, but it was warm and social, and helped to the triumph of a feeling I had that nothing made me regret running away from Rippenger's school.

An adventure befell us in the night. A farmer's wife, whom we asked for a drink of water after dark, lent us an old blanket to cover us in a dry ditch on receiving our promise not to rob the orchard. An old beggar came limping by us, and wanted to share our covering. My companion sank right under the blanket to peer at him through one of its holes. He stood enormous above me in the moonlight, like an apparition touching earth and sky.

"Cold, cold," he whined; "there's ne'er a worse off but there's a better off. Young un!" His words dispersed the fancy that he was something horrible, or else my father in disguise going to throw off his rags, and shine, and say he had found me. "Are ye one, or are ye two?" he asked.

I replied that we were two.

"Then I'll come and lie in the middle," said he.

"You can't; there's no room," I sang out.

"Lord," said he, "there's room for any reckoning o' empty stomachs in a ditch."

"No, I prefer to be alone; good-night," said I.

"Why!" he exclaimed, "where ha' you been t' learn language? Halloa!"

"Please, leave me alone; it's my intention to go to sleep," I said, vexed at having to conciliate him; he had a big stick.

"Oho!" went the beggar. Then he recommenced:

"Tell me you've stole nothing in your life! You've stole a gentleman's tongue, I knows the ring o' that. How comes you out here? Who's your mate there down below? Now, see, I'm goin' to lift my stick."

At these menacing words the girl jumped out of the blanket, and I called to him that I would rouse the farmer.

"Why . . . because I'm goin' to knock down a apple or two on your head?" he inquired, in a tone of reproach. "It's a young woman you've got there, eh? Well, odd grows odder, like the man who turned three shillings into five. Now, you gi' me a lie under your blanket, I'll knock down a apple apiece. If ever you've tasted gin, you'll say a apple at night's a cordial, though it don't intoxicate."

The girl whispered in my ear. "He's lame as ducks." Her meaning seized me at once; we both sprang out of the ditch and ran, dragging our blanket behind us. He pursued, but we eluded him and dropped on a quiet sleeping-place among furzes. Next morning, when we took the blanket to the farm-house, we heard that the old wretch had traduced our characters, and got a breakfast through charging us with the robbery of the apple-tree. I proved our innocence to the farmer's wife by putting down a shilling. The sight of it satisfied her. She combed my hair, brought me a bowl of water and a towel, and then gave us a bowl of milk and bread, and dismissed us, telling me I had a fair face and dare-devil written on it; as for the girl, she said of her that she knew gypsies at a glance, and what God Almighty made them for there was no guessing. This set me thinking all through the day, "What can they have been made for?" I bought a red scarf for the girl, and other things she fixed her eyes on, but I lost a great deal of my feeling of fellowship with her.

"I dare say they were made for fun," I thought, when people laughed at us now, and I laughed also.

I had a day of rollicking laughter, puzzling the girl, who could only grin two or three seconds at a time, and then stared like a dog that waits for his master to send him off again running, the corners of her mouth twitching for me to laugh or speak, exactly as a dog might wag his tail. I studied her in the light of a harmless sort of unaccountable creature; witness at any rate for the fact that I had escaped from school.

We loitered half the morning round a cricketer's booth in a field, where there was moderately good cricketing. The people thought it of first-rate quality. I told them I knew a fellow who could bowl out either eleven in an hour and a half. One of the men frightened me by saying, "By Gearge! I'll in with you into a gig, and off with you after that ther' faller." He pretended to mean it, and started up. I watched him without flinching. He remarked that if I "had not cut my lucky from school, and tossed my cap for a free life, he was—" whatever may be expressed by a slap on the thigh. We played a single-wicket side game, he giving me six runs, and crestfallen he was to find himself beaten; but, as I let him know, one who had bowled to Heriot for hours and stood against Saddlebank's bowling was a tough customer, never mind his age.

This man offered me his friendship. He made me sit and eat beside him at the afternoon dinner of the elevens, and sent platefuls of food to the girl, where she was allowed to squat; and said he, "You and I'll tie a knot and be friends for life."

I replied, "With pleasure."

We nodded over a glass of ale. In answer to his questions, I stated that I liked farms, I would come and see his farm, I would stay with him two or three days, I would

give him my address if I had one, I was on my way to have a look at Riversley Grange.

"Hey!" says he, "Riversley Grange! Well, to be sure now! I'm a tenant of Squire Beltham's, and a right sort of landlord, too."

"Oh!" says I, "he's my grandfather, but I don't care much about him."

## The Game of Love[1]

*Mark Twain* (1835–1910)

When school broke up at noon, Tom flew to Becky Thatcher, and whispered in her ear:

"Put on your bonnet and let on you're going home; and when you get to the corner, give the rest of 'em the slip, and turn down through the lane and come back. I'll go the other way and come it over 'em the same way."

So the one went off with one group of scholars, and the other with another. In a little while the two met at the bottom of the lane, and when they reached the school they had it all to themselves. Then they sat together, with a slate before them, and Tom gave Becky the pencil and held her hand in his, guiding it, and so created another surprising house. When the interest in art began to wane, the two fell to talking. Tom was swimming in bliss. He said:

"Do you love rats?"

"No! I hate them!"

"Well, I do, too—*live* ones. But I mean dead ones, to swing round your head with a string."

"No, I don't care for rats much, anyway. What *I* like is chewing-gum."

[1] From *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Copyright, 1875, 1899, 1903, by Samuel L. Clemens. Harper & Brothers, publishers.

"Oh, I should say so! I wish I had some now."

"Do you? I've got some. I'll let you chew it awhile, but you must give it back to me."

That was agreeable, so they chewed it turn about, and dangled their legs against the bench in excess of contentment.

"Was you ever at a circus?" said Tom.

"Yes, and my pa's going to take me again some time, if I'm good."

"I been to the circus three or four times—lots of times. Church ain't shucks to a circus. There's things going on at a circus all the time. I'm going to be a clown in a circus when I grow up."

"Oh, are you! That will be nice. They're so lovely, all spotted up."

"Yes, that's so. And they get slathers of money—most a dollar a day, Ben Rogers says. Say, Becky, was you ever engaged?"

"What's that?"

"Why, engaged to be married."

"No."

"Would you like to?"

"I reckon so. I don't know. What is it like?"

"Like? Why it ain't like anything. You only just tell a boy you won't ever have anybody but him, ever ever *ever*, and then you kiss and that's all. Anybody can do it."

"Kiss? What do you kiss for?"

"Why, that, you know, is to—well, they always do that."

"Everybody?"

"Why, yes, everybody that's in love with each other. Do you remember what I wrote on the slate?"

"Ye—yes."

"What was it?"

"I sha'n't tell you."

"Shall I tell *you?*"

"Ye—yes—but some other time."

"No, now."

"No, not now—to-morrow."

"Oh, no, *now*. Please, Becky—I'll whisper it, I'll whisper it ever so easy."

Becky hesitating, Tom took silence for consent, and passed his arm about her waist and whispered the tale ever so softly, with his mouth close to her ear. And then he added:

"Now you whisper it to me—just the same."

She resisted for a while, and then said:

"You turn your face away so you can't see, and then I will. But you mustn't ever tell anybody—*will* you, Tom? Now you won't, *will* you?"

"No, indeed, indeed I won't. Now, Becky."

He turned his face away. She bent timidly around till her breath stirred his curls and whispered, "I—love—you!"

Then she sprang away and ran around and around the desks and benches, with Tom after her, and took refuge in a corner at last, with her little white apron to her face. Tom clasped her about her neck and pleaded:

"Now, Becky, it's all done—all over but the kiss. Don't you be afraid of that—it ain't anything at all. Please, Becky." And he tugged at her apron and the hands.

By-and-by she gave up, and let her hands drop; her face, all glowing with the struggle, came up and submitted. Tom kissed the red lips and said:

"Now it's all done, Becky. And always after this, you know, you ain't ever to love anybody but me, and you

ain't ever to marry anybody but me, never never and forever. Will you?"

"No, I'll never love anybody but you, Tom, and I'll never marry anybody but you—and you ain't to ever marry anybody but me, either."

"Certainly. Of course. That's *part* of it. And always coming to school or when we're going home, you're to walk with me, when there ain't anybody looking—and you choose me and I choose you at parties, because that's the way you do when you're engaged."

"It's so nice. I never heard of it before."

"Oh, it's ever so gay! Why, me and Amy Lawrence—"

The big eyes told Tom his blunder and he stopped, confused.

"Oh, Tom! Then I ain't the first you've ever been engaged to!"

The child began to cry. Tom said:

"Oh, don't cry, Becky, I don't care for her any more."

"Yes, you do, Tom—you know you do."

Tom tried to put his arm about her neck, but she pushed him away and turned her face to the wall, and went on crying. Tom tried again, with soothing words in his mouth, and was repulsed again. Then his pride was up, and he strode away and went outside. He stood about, restless and uneasy, for a while, glancing at the door, every now and then, hoping she would repent and come to find him. But she did not. Then he began to feel badly and fear that he was in the wrong. It was a hard struggle with him to make new advances, now, but he nerved himself to it and entered. She was still standing back there in the corner, sobbing, with her face to the wall. Tom's heart smote him. He went to her and stood a moment, not knowing exactly how to proceed. Then he said, hesitatingly:

"Becky, I—I don't care for anybody but you."

No reply—but sobs.

"Becky," pleadingly. "Becky, won't you say something?"

More sobs.

Tom got out his chiefest jewel, a brass knob from the top of an andiron, and passed it around her so that she could see it, and said:

"Please, Becky, won't you take it?"

She struck it to the floor. Then Tom marched out of the house and over the hills and far away, to return to school no more that day. Presently Becky began to suspect. She ran to the door; he was not in sight; she flew around to the play-yard; he was not there. Then she called:

"Tom! Come back, Tom!"

She listened intently, but there was no answer. She had no companions but silence and loneliness. So she sat down to cry again and upbraid herself; and by this time the scholars began to gather again, and she had to hide her griefs and still her broken heart and take up the cross of a long, dreary, aching afternoon, with none among the strangers about her to exchange sorrows with.

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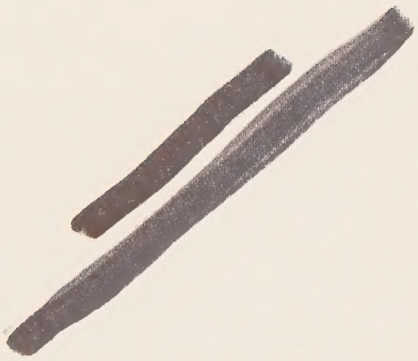
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